



*The one thing that honestly makes me want to change is seeing my mom's face. She looks devastated every time she sees me. I'ma keep it real. I break down and cry when she cried over the phone. That's when reality sunk in that I'm looking at some time. I went to my room — no, my cell, 'cause this will never be home — and I looked out my window and asked myself a question that I still don't know the answer to: "What's going to change?"*

*read the rest of Young B's POW on page 5*

**It's near three o'clock** in the afternoon and only a few words have been devoted to this latest editorial note that is going to print in an hour. What to do? What to say? What issues need to be addressed for all to embrace? Hmmm. Thinking of what to say. Oh this is hard. Hmmm....

Looking around the office, we see plenty of young people roaming the office, despite the San Francisco heat wave. We see some amazing young people typing Beat units; others are typing BWOs; some are folding Beats, while others are simply coming through 'cause they have no place to go, and this is as safe of a place as any.

We learned the other day that there are 34 interns overall in the office, 34 this summer. Wow! That's a lot of young people, and not all come from the system. Some come from good high schools, yet most of these interns come with the mission and good intentions to work with The Beat Within in some capacity. Right on, young colleagues!!

Last Wednesday, Michael Kroll, Kim Nelson, and this editor ventured up to Solano County Juvenile Hall and started brand new writing workshops with two of the long-term units, the "New Foundations" unit and the "Challenge" unit. We can't stress enough how successful the workshops went. The one-hour commute to Solano was so worth it! These afternoon sessions were incredible! The first hour we met with the young men and women in New Foundations, and they so embraced The Beat Within, as did the staff who made life for us very accommodating.

We ran the usual Beat workshops to an enthusiastic group hungry to write, to read and to share their honest work. It was such a pleasure to meet these young people and give them this opportunity to explore and share insights that otherwise would never have been shared with The Beat community — or, possibly, with anyone! They were so into the workshops that they didn't want the program to end! We know it helped a lot that we visited their units a few weeks back to give them an introduction of our work as we delivered numerous issues for them to read and absorb.

For your information, New Foundations is, if we recall correctly, a 6 to 9 month co-ed inpatient drug rehab program inside the hall, and the Challenge program is an up-to-two-year program for young men who once upon a time were candidates for the California Youth Authority. But since most counties no longer send young people to CYA, they now are housed in their county juvenile halls or camps.

Speaking of the Challenge unit... wow! In this second hour of workshops, it was our great pleasure to meet these 12 to 15 young men who respectfully dazzled us with some of the hardest hitting flows we've heard in a long, long time. The writing and attention that we were given was such a breath of fresh air. We are not sure what type of programs go into the hall, but we must say these young men (and young women) are thrilled to have The Beat Within program in their lives. Just as thrilled as these new writers are to be in The Beat, we were also told by staff of the Challenge and New Foundations how happy they are to have The Beat Within in their hall.

This has all happened so quickly, too. We know when the right people learn of your work how fast things can unfold in a positive way. We need to send a big thank you to the supportive juvenile superior court for encouraging juvenile hall to reach out to us, and of course to juvenile hall for opening the doors and welcoming our work in their hall. Big props to Supervisors — Ann-Marie Thomas and her staff at New Foundations, and Dwight Dalton and his staff at the Challenge unit. We so look forward to having a healthy relationship with the hall, especially the young people, and we can only hope The Beat goes on for years and years to come in Solano County!

Oh yeah, we also cannot forget Monterey County Juvenile Hall!!! This week will mark the first workshops with the young people in their hall. We really look forward to working with our new colleagues, Sam Patterson and Lauren Stroud, who will be conducting these initial workshops. It is our goal to come down to Monterey as soon as we can to meet the staff and the young people, as well as to put a face to The Beat Within. Thank you Sam and Lauren for taking our work on, and getting the doors of juvenile hall to open for us and the young people there. Props!

This week's topics are definitely equally matched when it comes to which topic was most popular. All three seem to be embraced by the young writers in our workshops. The first topic was, "Punishment" - If you read the 13.22 Editor's Note, you'll see that there are people who don't believe in punishment,

who don't think that it is effective in changing behavior. In fact, some believe that punishment only makes people worse, not better. You are some of the world's greatest experts on the subject of punishment. You have all been punished numerous times in numerous ways, from getting hit by an adult at home, to losing your freedom to the system. When you think about it, does punishment work to make you stop doing the things you are being punished for? If you get caught drinking or smoking and get a beating, does that stop you from drinking and smoking? If you are here for pulling a lick, is being here enough to keep you from doing it again? Why do we punish people, and what does punishment accomplish? These are difficult questions, so we hope you think hard about this subject before sharing your wisdom with us on the topic of punishment.

The second topic, "Avoiding a prison future" - We know that no one plans to go to prison. Yet, we also know that some of you are heading in that direction, whether you think you are or not. This was also true of some Bay Area young people we read about in a magazine article, young people who made some choices that put them on a different path. For example, 21-year-old David Cruz not only became the first person in his family to graduate from college (UC Berkeley), but the first who has never been to jail! He says, "I had an epiphany, and it was that I was going to die in the street, or take my life in my own grip." Once he made that choice, he found help to move him to a college path, and he took advantage of the help that was offered. What kind of help could the system offer you (both when you're free and when you're locked up) that could put you on a different path, one that leads to a college degree and not a prison sentence? Even without help from the system, what can you do to take your life "in your own grip" and seek out the help you need to put the past behind you and move towards a more positive and fruitful future?

Last topic, "What do your dreams mean?"

Some people have sweet dreams about family and friends and wake up feeling refreshed and happy. Some people have frightening nightmares of being pursued through the streets by monsters (or police), and wake up feeling drained and nervous. We'd like you to describe a particularly vivid dream you've had, and tell us what you think it means. Was something going on in your life that led to this dream, or was the dream a way of leading you toward something new in your life? Be as detailed as you can when remembering this dream (no X-rated dreams, please), and as thorough as you can when you explain what you think it means.

OK, before we call it an editorial note, allow us to share an email that was passed on to us from a dear friend. The subject line read, "The power of the pen - from Virginia Woolf to L. DeSalvo to The Beat Within." The email reads...

"Dear All,

"A long quote, but the perfect inspiration to cheer on the wonderful work the Beat Within does with young people.

"According to the Woolf scholar Madeline Moore, the act of writing 'completed autonomy for Woolf.' Many years later, when Virginia Woolf was writing *The Waves*, in the holograph of that novel, she distinguishes the children from one another by the way in which they go about the act of writing:

"They sat in rows, yawning or writing very laboriously, for already, though that might have seemed impossible, they had their minds, their characters. There was for instance, one most solemn child. He never dipped his pen without deliberation; often hesitating half an hour perhaps. But when he wrote the letters were firm & clear. Compare him with that moody fitful little girl. She swayed at her task, as if she despaired of ever getting it done; & then suddenly made a dart & wrote something very fast; & there was a boy who gaped at the page; & rolled in his seat & rumbled his hair. And the eel like boy; so fastidious so agile. One after another they dipped their pens.

"Writing... becomes the way in which the youngsters define themselves; it is also the way in which they construct a reality outside of themselves which they communicate to each other, so that each of them first creates their perceptions in the act of writing them down, and then tests their perceptions through sharing their writing with other human beings. Although writing begins as an intensely private act, it ends as a public one — as a great conspiracy of civilized people."

Thanks for reading. This issue goes out to YOU, whoever you are! You are brave enough (and smart enough) to pick up a Beat and embrace the priceless work of our writers. Thanks for reading and writing!! See you next week!

Yes... editorial note ramble done... It's three-thirty!

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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**Writers:** Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco, Maricopa County Arizona, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Bernalillio County New Mexico, Santa Cruz and Marin County Juvenile Halls. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415) 503-4170 or check us out at:

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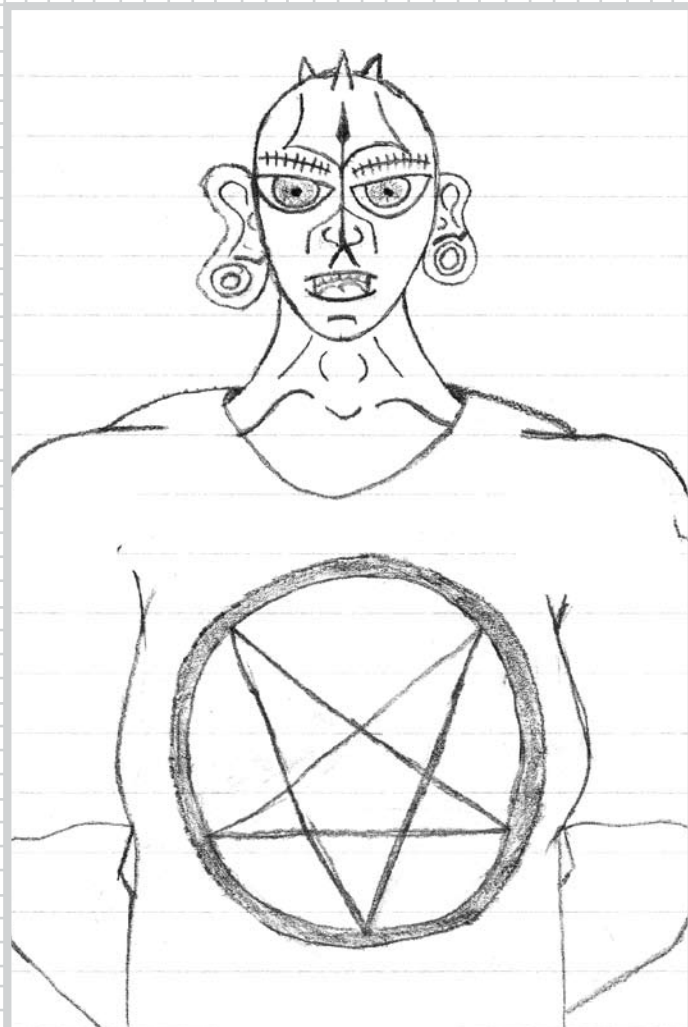
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### Punishment

What's crackin'? It's "The Tank" comin' from the max. Today's topic is punishment.

I've been punished my whole life, not just by this screwed up system, but by my parents. Not always physically either. I was punished by not growing up in a wealthy family, so I didn't have good things. That punished me because look at me now. I'ma juvenile in the system and still being punished. But it ain't going to change a thing. I'ma get out and try to do good like I always do, but I always mess up somehow. But it's nothing.

Punishment doesn't accomplish anything for me, but for some people it does. I know people who did time and got out with a whole different mentality. I don't know why I couldn't do that, but whatever, I ain't like other people.

I've been punished by teachers, but what did that do but make me get kicked out of schools? I haven't been to a regular high school. It's always been community schools. I think I been punished by that by not being with normal teachers and normal students. Community schools... it's all mostly homeboys, so that's trouble because after school. We usually drink and that leads to trouble which leads to punishment by getting locked up. Or a dirty bottle which would lead to another dirty bottle and then, for sure, you'll get locked up.

That's what I think whatever I'm out.

**-Knock Out, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Even though you were kicked out of regular school, you write very well, and you clearly think deeply about things. The "punishment" you suffered by growing up poor is very real, and you are feelings some of its effects now. So, the trick is to overcome, as an adult, what you had no control over as a child. Since you keep messing up even though you're trying to do good, we hope you to focus on a single problem, and that is your drinking. Your obvious ability to think and reason flies out the window once you get drunk, and that's when you do things that can have really bad consequences. If you can live without it, we encourage you to try.*

### Deadly Game

Play with death; it's a gamble for your last breath  
Disturb the gates of hell; nowhere to run or repel  
Bodies hit the ground, collapsed for that round  
Bloody rain to the drain; el Diablo laughing insane  
Enemigas can't hang; they're nada to this sick side I bang

Ain't nothing new; still ridin' with a chosen few  
Strictly vets and cholos

Claimin' the fame, pero not livin' up to that name  
Runnin' like lambs, puttin' their gang to shame  
So-called tricks of the trade long forgotten  
Code of silence no mas, so they're snitchin' rotten  
Kick rocks, 'cause you foo's ain't made for the block  
'Cause these days the calles are more than just talk  
Wrong color, wrong side, pues tonight could be your night

Simon, the angel of death is always down to ride  
Like a shadow dancing under the moonlit sky  
By day you'll disappear, your jefa screaming, "Why?"

Play your cards; play 'em right  
'Cause luck can't always save you from the light

**-Grumpy, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: When you write the words, "Wrong color," doesn't it seem silly to you? A "wrong" color? How could a color be wrong or right? It's just a color, nothing more! The meaning you give it and the things you do for it simply put your life and your freedom at risk, not to mention the lives and freedom of others. We don't know if you believe in god or not, but if you do, then there's a part of god's creation that you feel superior to, able to judge even better than the Creator, deciding to "correct" God's mistakes... Damn, what incredible self-indulgent arrogance! (And, if you don't believe in god, we'll have to ask — again — why you think you are less important than a cause you had nothing to do with creating, but only accepted as any follower accepts the words of others...)*

### Avoiding A Prison Future

What's up, Beat? Well, I'ma keep it real at all times. So I'ma tell you like this. The route that I'm taking is leading me to prison. My ways — like selling drugs, pulling licks, and holding weapons — is leading me to go to prison. An' since I been locked up, it's like I'm starting to wake up.

It's sad that it took this long for me to want to change my life, instead of going to Chowchilla Women's State Prison. I mean, I been living the street life for so long, I'm ready to adventure to the other side. I really ain't never seen that side.

An' today I went to court. I was supposed to go to Colorado, but they gave me a second chance, so I think it's time for me to go to school an' get a job, change my life around an' start being around positive people. But in order for me to change, I'ma have to finish this program, an' try to stay away from the 'hood, 'cause I don't want to be like my brother an' sisters, 'cause they just got out of the pen.

It's time for me to get right, an' that's how I'ma avoid prison. Keep ya heads up.

**-Bri, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This piece makes us believe you when you write that you're "starting to wake up." We sure hope you follow through on the promises you make here. They sound simple, but we both know that it's easier said than done. But without those changes, the life ahead of you will be much more difficult, because you really will be on a path to state prison, places that make juvenile hall seem like day care. Keep this piece close to you when you leave this place. Tape it to your bedroom mirror so you can see it every morning and remember how much you hated being here. Don't disappoint yourself!*

### 10 Year Later

10 years is a mighty long time

But these years would have been beautiful

If I put down the nine

If God ever gives me a chance I'm going legit grind  
Hitting 1000 push-ups a day so I know muscle gone grow  
Forget friends, I don't trust nobody. That's all I know.

10 years later I hope my heart don't turn cold

At that time I hope I hit the street

Doing community service and still writing to The Beat  
'Cause I want to tell the youngsters to put down their heat  
Get your education and get rid of the weapon  
Do what right follow your heart and keep on stepping

I hope I be in peace in 10 years

I'm tired of this shhh don't want to shed no more tears  
Right now this shhhtee place got me feeling hopeless  
Please God judge me so I can regain my focus  
Back then ninja's get out of line, I have to bust their bubble

10 year later I staying away from the trouble

I'm gon' live good so I moving out of the block

No more trouble no more struggle no more dope spot

No more violent, no more team

No more serving flend but still I gone chasing my green

Soon as I touch down once again

I'm gonna chase my dream

Getting my life together so I can live like a king

Mama I love you, everything is OK, so be happy and smile  
Your son doing good -- he just away for a while.

**-Vietnamese Chopstick, Alameda**

*From The Beat: See, this humanity, grace and heart in your writing is what will help you keep your mental freedom while you are behind bars. We hope you send a copy of this to your mom.*

### What Dreams Mean

To me, dreams mean an opportunity. They show me that I can help make a difference, if not in the world, or my community, then in my own family. Also dreams to me are an easy way to escape from these walls. It's an opportunity for me to free myself from my past and just sit back and lose myself in my mind. It can also be a sign in some cases because maybe it's telling you not to go in a certain area of place.

Some call it your conscience or maybe common sense, but to me I see my dreams as a wake-up call. I say that because I swore up and down that I would never come back again, but yet, here I am. I truly just want to get out and stay out. But now I know I cannot say never. All I can say is that I don't imagine seeing myself in any other institutions once I am released.

The one thing that honestly makes me want to change is seeing my mom's face. She looks devastated every time she sees me. I'ma keep it real. I break down and cry when she cried over the phone. That's when reality sunk in that I'm looking at some time. I went to my room — no, my cell, 'cause this will never be home — and I looked out my window and asked myself a question that I still don't know the answer to: "What's going to change?"

I ask that question day in and day out, and yet I still have no answer to that question. I see cars driving by and, yeah, it hurts to know life is going with me being in here. What hurts even more is knowing that my sister graduated today and I missed it. The only promise I could make to her was that I wouldn't miss her High School Graduation. I'm just going to make sure I keep that promise. I'm just going to make sure I keep that promise.

Shout out to all my ninjas I knew from the outs. Stay up.

P.S. – To The Beat: I want to let you guys know that we all appreciate all that you guys do. Thanks.

**-Young B, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We are so very impressed with this fine contribution to The Beat! It shows such deep thought (and pain), and it is expressed so very well, that we have to believe your are turning a corner in your life. We don't know what's around that corner (nobody knows the future), but the very fact that you are asking yourself what's going to change is, itself, a reflection of change that is already taking place. We're not worried that you haven't come up with any answers because we are confident that if you're seeking answers, you will find them. Anybody with the insight and honesty to write a piece like this has what it takes to move to another level of thought and existence. You have it, Young B. Now use it! (P.S. We had to take out your individual shout outs as not appropriate for The Beat. Sorry.)

### Punishment In The System

Nowadays in California, punishment in the system is all about money from in here (juvi). They give us snacks, let us come out hella much, just make it seem coo', so you'll keep coming until you hit the pen. That's when they really start making money, making them work for like 10 cents a minute.

This system all bullshhhh. So now, they don't punish us hard until we get to the pen, really start making dough, but by then it's too late.

Wake up young dudes. Look at the picture and the game you're involving yourself in and don't know where the finish is, don't even know the rules. So ya make ya own and everybody know where that end — the grave or the pen.

**-J.R, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We wish it was as easy as just telling people to "wake up." We know through experience that people "wake up" at different times. For some, it takes one big mistake to see the handwriting on the wall and wake up and make changes. For others, that development into responsibility and adulthood never comes at all. We're very glad that your eyes are open and you see where this road leads.

### The P-Dropper

Tell me what you need my love  
Tell me what you thinking of  
Tell me how you feel

And if the feeling is for real  
Let me lick your lips

And lick down through you thighs

Baby girl you know I love you

Rigghh....

All day, everyday and every na na na na na ...

Baby girl you know I love you Rigghh...

All day everyday and every night.

**-Yogi, Santa Clara**

**The Beat Within:** You might not be able to tell by these lyrics, but this song is hot! And not only did Yogi write this melodic tune, but he had the courage to stand up in the Hall and sing it. Here's to you going far!

### This Life

Living this life of a mob star  
ninjas on the block  
running from the cop car  
pulling out thangs that bust far,  
pop yo' head like a pop tart  
stealing cars just for the hot parts  
this how the game starts

Ninjas on the block tote thangs  
big ones, small ones,  
red flames bust your head  
have yo momma go insane  
have your whole family dog in the pain  
have ninjas on the block call you a shame  
caught slippin' on the block  
know you gone make  
riding around getting high  
trying to ease the pain you know  
and yo' potna just been slam  
not knowin' if he is going to heaven or hell.

It's stuck in your brain now  
you posting up on the block like a crane  
ninjas slide through  
you ready to split they brains.  
Have them all over the news like they fame  
feel like it's hitting your face like rain  
ninjas out here don't know what you mean  
now you in jail facing a murder man  
sittin in your cell 'bout to go insane  
flip out don't care what know body think.

Leaving this life of a mob star  
ninjas on the block running from the cop car  
pulling out thangs that bust far  
pop your head like a pop tart  
stealing cars just for the hot parts  
this how the game starts.

**-Boobie, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** The story you tell in this rap is unfortunately the story of too many young people these days. You tell it in a new and interesting way, and that has an important power to transform a situation—or the person writing or reading. We hope you keep writing so we can keep hearing your voice. This piece is well-written and has some surprising images (that's good). You got a nice flow. As the writing is so alive and paints such a strong picture, it feels even more upsetting to read (that means we feel the truth of the situation strongly, and that's also good). So many lives messed up, and not only the people getting shot. What do you think it will take before someone can leave the life of a mob star before tragedy has happened?

### Punishment

I think what the system calls punishment is bs. They put us behind these walls for what? Ninjas don't learn shhh in here. All they think about is a smarter way to do something. Or they set a ninja for failure by sending us to group homes when they know damn well we finna run from them thangs. So what they call punishment ain't coo', for real.

I understand you gotta lock a ninja up when he out there doin' his thang, but the system don't know what a ninja gotta go through day to day, so they label a young thug a menace to society, and they think they know you just by what some paperwork say.

If they really cared about the young thugs, they wouldn't do us how they be doin'. They would try to help us by helping with jobs and otha shhh to keep us busy and off the block. But instead, they send us back to the streets on probation, which is bound to land us back in this green shhh and some khakis, feel me.

But I'm gone. You notice!

**-Cal, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This is a thoughtful piece that not only faults the system for the "punishment" it inflicts that makes the situation worse, but also makes some simple but important suggestions for how things could be made much better. When the failure rate of these places remains so high year after year, why do you think the system keeps doing what it does? What kinds of jobs do you see out there that the government could provide for you to do that would help you the most to stay free of the behavior that leads here?*

### Who Are You

Who are you?

A young handsome man

Or an immature child?

A man full of laughs

Or a boy that can never smile?

Who are you?

A man with an education

Or a kid that skips school?

The man with a future

Or a homeless fool?

Who are you?

A man with a family

With whom he spends all his time

Or a desperate soul

Too occupied begging for a time?

Who are you?

A man who tells the truth

Or a child that can only tell lies?

A man who never gives up

Or a boy who never tries?

Who are you?

I've given up my old ways

And have begun a new life

I left my childish ways behind

And started a future with no strife

I am no longer an immature child

Who has nothing to do

I'm a man...

Who are you?

**-Cal, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We love the series of excellent questions you throw out there in this tight poem. But even more than those questions, we love your clear determination to answer these questions for yourself in a way that takes you from here and puts you on a path towards freedom and a better life. It sounds like you know what it really means to say, "I'm a man."*

### My Dreams

My dreams mean everything that I stand for  
and everything that I endure in me.

My dreams is like fish that live and in wide open seas.  
My dreams are also like a big tree, but it started out as a seed

My dreams can either make me or break me  
No matter what my circumstances my dreams cannot be taken.

**-Lil' New Orleans, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Great images that paint a picture as we read. Great rich, specific language. Hang onto those dreams.*

### This Is Why I Write

I write with a purpose in mind to change lives,  
To change a thug captive who's trapped in his own mind.  
I'm hoping and praying that these people begin to realize  
That I've been there, done it, and see it with my own eyes.

And for them rich kids rocking Versace  
And the prostitutes on the corner busy, selling their bodies.

And for the teenager thinking that she's a hottie  
When everybody knows that she's really really really naughty.

I write for the runaway teen roaming the streets,  
And for the people that true love is under the sheets.

I write for all the people who lose control,  
Just keep it all together and don't lose your soul.

I wrote for all the people sitting up in prison,  
and for those troubled teens who just seem to not want to listen.

And lets not forget them thugs, I write for them too,  
and us born begin believers 'cause we fight for the truth.

And I write for the people who have heat to pack  
And for them daybreak victims asking for they clothes back.

**-Espo, Alameda**

*From The Beat: This poem expresses everything about our highest hopes and visions for The Beat Within and our incredibly talented writers. But you left out the most important thing: You also write to save yourself. Because if you keep on this path, your writing can save you.*

### When Your Heart Turns Cold

When your heart turns cold it causes your soul to freeze.

It spreads throughout your spirit like a ruthless feeling disease

The walls that once were down now stand firm and tall  
Safe from hate, love, pain, joy — until you feel nothing at all

When our hearts turn cold, a baby's cry means nothing  
A dead corpse is trivial, mothers neglecting children is daily

Loneliness becomes your routine friend, death seems like tranquility

Sleeping is never pleasant if you ever sle3ep at all  
You forget ideals and turn off the reason to make sure the product gets sold

You don't understand how I behave... Just wait 'til your heart turns cold

**-Diablito, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We'd rather not wait til our hearts turn cold, señor/ We've been there, done that before/ We are quite happy that our heart's turned warm/ We believe that's the heart's rightful form/ It breaks when we see something sad / But rejoices when we're glad*



### My View Of Dreams

I sometimes have dreams that don't let me sleep and make me feel ill, even sometimes cold-hearted or insane. But like family secrets, they can be told. It's not necessarily family problems, but reality of shhh that can happen physically, even mentally.

But dreams are good too. They're a pathway, or call it escape from reality, somewhere no one can tell or say shhh to you, somewhere really where you can call your own world.

Well this is my view of my dreams. That's all. See you.

**-Quez, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for keeping it real on the subject of dreams. We're interested in what you mean by "insane," and why you sometimes feel that way. We like your description of dreams as your own reality that no outsider can intrude on.

### The White Room

Sometimes you mind just goes away. Reality falls away, and imagination dies before it can develop. Life becomes a sealed room of all white, where you spend hours staring blindly at this blank, sterile word.

I've been in that room, that horrid white room. You can't tell where the light is coming from, the ceiling is the same color and texture as the walls and floor. I've been in that room, where you go insane at the monotony of it all. Nothing changes. You never get hungry, thirsty, or tired. You just stand still and try to imagine yourself somewhere else, but you cannot.

You claw at the walls, tiny slivers of paint and concrete flaking away as you throw yourself at the walls. The white turns to grey, the pureness slowly gives way to scratches and gouges.

I've been in that white room.

Now it's gray.

I changed the monotony.

**-Stephan, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** The room is also a person's mind... and the minute you decided to paint the "room" of your mind with your words, and your imagination, and your poetry, you began changing the colors, adding personality, life, and hope. Great piece.

### Close To Existence

It's night or near to morning,

But I'm not sure, for it's swirling, turning, burning-

Melting down into a sandish ash.

He smokes it up with the hash,

Sitting by the ocean near the pier-

Watch the acid drip, drip, drop-

Proving the masses massive liars.

Trickling almost tickling, mixing it with water...

Sparkling stars for me, crystals being chased by my fear.

For it's what destiny says to me that truly tests the last of me.

Camouflaged by my songs,

Scared by my wrongs,

Staring into my own oblivion

When traveling in what I'm stranded in.

Sand stopped,

Reality shocked and dropped.

Sounds broken by a tear in time,

Spoken barriers broken and meant to rhyme.

**-Fidget, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** Your words do more than just rhyme. You are the real thing. Your talent is immense. With diligence and intent, you could become a genuine poet. We know what you've been going through, and we know life is not easy right now. We strongly urge you to keep writing, and to accept the help that is offered to you. A good recovery program could give you back your life. What greater gift is there?

### Why Do People Think People In Jail Don't Have any Type Of Skills?

Some of the reason why I think people discriminate against people that come to jail is because one part of your life somebody in your family is in jail ...so they treat you how not to go to jail and from that point on it just keep on flowing and now you're older and come to find out you in jail.

Now everybody is thinking in they head "This boy has no home training, this boy on the outs don't go to school. If he do, he don't stay."

Just by looking at my dreads they think I done killed someone. But all this stuff don't nobody know the truth. The truth is that I do go to school and I don't skip and the funny part about it is I wanna go to college.

Some people my age don't even think that way not community college a university it'll be better if I get a scholarship so that I can save some money. Just because somebody commit any type of crime doesn't mean that they're not ready for society.

But everybody really is ... we just make some silly ass mistakes that everybody makes. But that don't give nobody the right to say we're not going to get anywhere in life. If you put your mind to it you could do anything you want!

It's all about knowledge.

**-Jhacorieo, Alameda**

**From the Beat:** The thing is, if you have enough faith in yourself, those other people don't matter. Do you people in your life that support your dreams and are also working towards positive goals - in your family or among your friends? Because getting that support can help you.

### Punishment

Everybody hates punishment,

but of course if you do something wrong

you will need to face whatever the punishment is.

Well, if you getting a punishment, I think that it is just gone make it worse.

Why? Because you ain't gonna wanna be bossed around,

and you ain't gone let no one hurt you no more.

Like me: I been abused for twelve years.

Now I'm sixteen, so I won't let no adult or kid put they hands on me

without it being a fight.

Why? Because no one has the right to abuse you.

When some teenagers out there get beatings for drinking and smoking,

I feel that is stupid because if that is what the person wants to do,

they gone do it regardless.

And if they say they did stop, most of the times they didn't,

and they're doing it on the street with a friend, so it will be behind the adults' back. So why beat your child?

You can try to encourage them to go to a drug use class.

When you do bad things in life, it will soon be seen.

You will get caught up, and locked up.

Doing time wondering why you did what you did.

**-Karmeisha, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We hate the fact that a young woman as bright and lovely as you, or any other young person, had to endure twelve years of abuse. That is a crime worthy of punishment, in our book. However, every cloud has a silver lining (as the cheesy old saying goes). You have emerged from this experience as a strong young woman who will not allow anyone to make you a victim. Thanks for your solid advice on this topic.

## My Story

My story is about my life. To who ever reads, the following chapters, this you may want to get some Kleenex for when you cry or some chill pills for when some parts make you angry. What drove me to writing this was I wanted to let my past go, so I decide to type it out when I had some extra time in the d-home. Today's date is May 7, 2008. I've been locked up in this d-home for about 72 days to be exact. Well that's not the beginning of my story well let me start it out from when I was born.

### Chapter One

#### Unexpected Birth To a Mother Of Two Kids At The Age Of Nineteen.

The morning of September nine in nineteen ninety two was the morning my mom had me at Chinle Arizona's Hospital. My doctor was Dr. Webster. At that point I was seven pounds seven ounces.

My mom was that single mom when she had me but guess a little after that she started dating my little sister's to be dad. His name is P. Skinner.

I can't remember much as a baby but as my toddler years came into play was around my kindergarten year in Chinle.

I remember my first day at school because the first day of school in my entire life was the worst. I remember that I wouldn't let my mom or "dad" go for nothing. I cried forever in the principle's office when my parents left me. Then I'd say an hour later I went to class with a lot of other kids. The teacher made me write a lot she told me to practice my ABC's even though I didn't want to do it.

But then the last bell to go home came and I was the happiest kid that day at school I ran outside forgetting my book bag and jacket in the classroom. I ran for my mom and then came after me was my teacher saying I forgot some things. My mom grabbed them and then we started to walk home.

So even though some kids are excited for their first day of school I wasn't one bit because I thought I wouldn't see my mom again or my "dad".

So the next day was a little better but not as much. But time went by when I was used to school.

Sometimes I would go to school because I was scared of staying at home because my mom would start to hit me when I did something wrong. I remember once I used to many q-tips and I hid them in my room under my bed. She found them when I was at school, so when I came back from school I didn't get a hug for my good report card but I got a smack on the face by my mom because she found my q-tips I had hid. I think that was the first time my mom ever hit me.

After that I was getting hit regularly at home because I did something to piss off my mom. But I wouldn't want to stay home for any of that so I had no choice but to go to school.

### Chapter 2

#### My Mom Is Missing!!!!

As I got older like around the age of seven or eight I stayed with my auntie, because we got kicked out of our old house in Phoenix because my mom was smoking pot and drinking too much.

When I went to stay with my auntie my mom went back to Phoenix and she said she'd be back in a week because she had to try and get the rest of our stuff and an apartment for us to live. She came back in a week with my little sister. She left her with my auntie and the rest of us and said

she forgot to do something in Phoenix and that she would be back in a week and that we'll be going back to Phoenix with her in a week.

Then a week went by and there was no sign of her I started getting scared that she wouldn't come back, and it was almost a year that we couldn't find her.

Until one day my grandparents came to visit us and they never visit my auntie unless it's really important, so that day they didn't say anything but to pack a bag worth of three days of cloths. So we did and that afternoon we headed off for Phoenix and we got there at night and we went to Paul's sister's house where we used to live before. She gave my auntie a piece of paper and she gave it to my grandpa he started the truck and we went down the street and two more streets to the left and stopped in front of this house and waited for a while.

Then I'd say about a half hour later I saw a figure walk up the street in our direction and something told me that it was my mom. I got out of the truck and ran to her it was my mom and I was so happy because I hadn't seen her in a year and I wouldn't let her go. I was crying so much my eyes swelled up, but then we (my sister and me) went to her boyfriend's apartment. He was a white guy and I didn't like him one bit. Then my sister and I ended up staying with our mom and her new boyfriend in Phoenix.

### Chapter Three

#### This Place Is Hell!!!

As time went by I started to realize I didn't have my real mom. This woman who was supposed to be my mom was a way different person then I had pictured her in the beginning. This woman was starting to get used to doing drugs around her kids like it didn't hurt us like there was nothing to it.

I then became scared of my mom and her new boyfriend. When they would go and get high in their room me and my sister would have to stay in the house at all times and never answer the door to anyone.

Once I called the cops on her and "Rich", her boyfriend, and when the cops came she denied everything and told the cops that I like to make up lies to hurt her. None of that was one bit true.

After that when my mom and Rich would get high they would lock me and my sister up in our closed or their closet for days at a time with no food only a bucket of water and a bag of old chips. My sister and me would beg them to let us out, and we even said we'd stay inside and not tell on them again.

To this day my mom would still deny this, deny locking my sister and me up. I guess it's because she and Rich used to do meth, crack, and heroin, but my mom would still smoke weed and drink occasionally. But this I would have to admit was hell! Even though my sister was too little to remember sometimes I think she can remember some parts of it.

### Chapter Four

#### Eviction

Guess about a year went by and we well my mom and Rich got a letter saying some words that I didn't know at the time, but later on I found it out. The letter said we only had a month to move out and that we're EVICTED due to unpaid rent. This was horrible because that meant that we had to go back all the way to Chinle again, and my auntie and Rich didn't get along for anything.

When we went back we had to go through some arrangements my mom called it. Guess she meant that by my auntie and Rich not getting along. I guess things were weird with a "white boy" in town because Chinle there



continued from previous page

are hardly any white people. My mom was on the bad side of our family for a while because of the "billiganna" my grandpa would call Rich. That was basically our eviction from Phoenix Arizona.

### Chapter Five

#### My Pre-Teens in Gallup, New Mexico

My Pre-teens started out in Gallup, NM with my mom and Rich. It's basically when I started using drugs and alcohol; this is the time when more abuse started to take place. The abuse with my mom got more verbal and more violent, the abuse with Rich also got more verbal, violent, but most of all it got sexual. I was about 12 or 13 years old when this started.

I went to Gallup Middle School; I was in the 6th grade on the Cougar's team. This year was the first time I had ever had a real "boyfriend". His name was Dennison, we were together for the first semester of school then he broke up with me because I got close to him.

I guess the cause for me getting close was because I thought I needed a boy or a guy to love me, right?

This was the time Rich started touching me at night or when my mom was at work, I was scared of him at this time. I didn't know what to do, because this was a man touching me that my mom loved. Sometimes I was scared to sleep at night, so I'd stay up through the whole night and try to stay up during my classes at school the next day. This was starting to be a nightmare for me.

Then my 7th grade year came none of the abuse lowered or even stopped it seemed to become bigger. Then towards the end of the year we moved out to a house that we rented.

After my 7th grade year I decided that I couldn't take the abuse anymore so I decided to runaway. That day was Friday after the fourth of July, I went to Cameron's my boyfriend at the time. He lived on the west side of Gallup, NM. I stayed the whole weekend until my mom found me.

Then came my 8th grade year when I left Cameron and then hooked up and broke up with a lot of guys, until testing week came in March is when I meet my next love.

His name was Donovan. We were together for like almost half a year, but the summer after 8th grade I decided to run away again and this time I was with Donovan. He stayed

with me the whole time I was on the run until my half sister Shenoah found me and took me back home.

At summer school is when I got my first pair of tattoos, one of them say's ICP and the other one says Juggalette.

Then my 9th grade year came, but it didn't start out all peaches and cream because it's when my boyfriend Donovan broke up with me. I remember I couldn't eat for days, and I'd cry myself to sleep at night for two weeks straight. I couldn't believe what was happening, during that time I started my hook up and brake up routine all over again until I meet my now ex-boyfriend Darrin. I thought it would work out, but my man now is Chris and with this one I hope it works out for us.

In the 9th grade was when I told on my mom and Rich, I told the cops that they were abusing me verbally, physically, and sexually. This lead to me being with my grandparents in Pinedale, NM. I hated being on the reservation with them, but then eventually I ran away again and my grandma set me up with some case management program. I ended up being sent to Fort Defiance Indian Hospital like some sick patient. I was admitted to the ACU, it's a treatment center. I stayed there for two months before I got out.

On December 21 I was released, and four days later I ran away again. I ended up in a teen shelter in Albuquerque, NM, and I ran form there after being there for only two weeks.

On the run I ran into some pretty good people like my street dad J'son, this man is my everything because he showed me that I have a life to live for and a light that shines bright no matter what happens. But I got caught stealing at the Coronado Mall in Albuquerque, and that is when I ended up in the D-home here in Albuquerque.

This is were I started typing my story from the D-home computer in Unit F, but from here I don't' know what's planned for me besides being sent to Lamy, NM.

Who ever may read this, good luck to you. I'm out for now, until next time. The End

#### -Shenece, Land Of Enchantment

**From The Beat:** Excellent piece of honest writing. You deliver a powerful piece for all of us to read. We felt it was important to republish the first chapters that were showcased a couple Beats back to help readers see the full picture! We do hope this is not the last time we hear from you. Keep writing and sharing your important story! We are thinking good thoughts for you.

## Becoming A Mother

I sit here and wonder how it feels to be a mother. My son will be here sometime between the ending of June or the beginning of July. I'm scared, but also happy. I have a big responsibility to take care of and I know it's gonna change me for the better. It's not gonna be about me for a change.

My first priority will be my son, then me. I have family support and I've been with my baby father for almost four years now, so I think I have it good. This is my first child and also my baby father's first child, so this is new for the both of us, but we plan to make it the best.

I graduate next year and I'm going to college to be a lawyer. No matter what it takes, I will make sure my son has what he needs. It's going to be hard going to school and taking care of my son, but I'm gonna manage. I will tell my son my mistakes, and I can only pray that he don't make the same. I'm gonna be the best mother I can be. I learned to love me, so I can love my son.

That's all I want is to have a happy life with my son. It means the world to me. I have to change and I will, and not later but NOW, because Lamont's almost here.

#### -Keishawn, Alameda

**From The Beat:** By the time you read this, Baby Lamont will have probably arrived! We are so happy for you and wish you and your growing family a bright and healthy future.

## My Middle School Graduation

Yesterday it was supposed to be one of the best days of my life. It was my middle school graduation. I was supposed to graduate the 8th grade, and it was supposed to be my older sister's graduation, but I'm in here, can't go to my graduation, nor my sister's graduation.

When I'm in here, I realize that it's a big mistake that I made being in here! I told myself right now that I'm not gonna come back to this place anymore. I know you guys heard that a bunch of times but this is the truth. I'm not coming back anymore.

I felt hellas sad yesterday cause I couldn't see my graduation, and the suckiest part is my sister's the first person to graduate in my family and I couldn't be there! It sucked!

I'm gonna try to avoid the bad stuff and avoid all the bad influences so I won't come back to this place and wont miss out on important things in my life such as this one. But you know sometime in life you got to face it, got to be a man and man up and accept the consequence for what you did.

#### - Diep, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** Yes, it's very sad you made a choice to prevent you from being with your family, and to graduate on stage with your 8th grade class. We believe you when you say you are not coming back. What must you honestly do to make this happen?

## The Story Of Ryan, A Short Story

Ryan has always been a quiet respectful man. Never bothered anybody and was always tailored in the finest suits. He had a casual routine, not unlike a small child's day planner. You could not call him stupid, though he was "simple minded".

He was found sitting next to a dead man in a dark alley. He was crying and holding his favorite rubber "smiley face" stress ball.

When the police got there, they knew immediately that the large figure, holding that signature squeeze ball, was Ryan Andrews.

"Detective Roberts, possible 187 on 8th and 23rd. One victim and suspected witness and/or suspect." The radio screeched inside the detectives car, "copy dispatch in route."

Replied Roberts. He reached for the small hidden light and siren box under the dashboard. The red, blue and emergency lights lit up the small parking lot of the Jack In The Box.

His p71 police interceptor cut the light 11:00 traffic. He finished his chicken salad just as he pulled up to the long string of N.Y.P.D black and whites. He stepped from his car and flashed his badge to the rookie guarding the entrance of the alley.

The tunnel between the two buildings was scoured with every kind of bodily fluid and spray paint there was available. Roberts could already tell this wasn't Ryan's usual route home.

He was still huddled next to the corpse squeezing his ball. Fortunately, Robert had always carried small plastic badges for the elementary schools he frequented. He pulled one out of his coat pocket. The small sparkling piece of gold plastic caught Ryan's attention. His big brown lonely eyes gazed at the intricate designs on the small toy.

Detective Roberts cautiously approached Ryan and placed the small clip on his collar. His red swollen eyes immediately lit up with joy and excitement, but they slowly faded back when he looked about his surroundings.

"Hi... I know I should always tell the policeman everything, but..." Ryan trailed off. But he then realized and grouped the large soft palm. Roberts slowly started moving. He opened the passenger side of his car and slowly placed Ryan inside. He fastened his seat belt and closed the door. As he was walking to his door his captian ran up to him and tapped his shoulder, "you're going to let him sit in the front? Regulations say..." "forget the regulations I'm taking him home!" yelled Roberts.

He stepped into his car and starred at Ryan. "I'm sorry your boss man yelled at you." Ryan said. "It's alright I'll set him straight on Monday." Usually that comment would have made people laugh, but Ryan just sat with a confused look on his face.

"Now I know you are hungry. I heard you've been sitting there since 6:00 in the afternoon." Ryan smiled sheepishly and nodded his head. They pulled into a White Castle Burger and sat behind a dirty pickup truck in the drive thru. Ryan slipped a twenty to the perky girl at the counter. She was rather beautiful Roberts thought to himself. Their supply of 16 burgers, 2 shakes, and 2 curly fries all went to Ryan. He ate slowly and carefully as if it was his first time eating. Roberts knew that Ryan needed to go home and get some sleep. He slowly pulled out of the White Castle and headed for Ryan's home.

### Chapter 2

Roberts shoved his key into the ancient lock. The door slowly creaked open. He would have to fix that on Sunday. He shrugged off his coat and let out a long, tired sigh. He walked towards the kitchen and pulled a frozen chicken stir fry from the freezer.

"Hmmm. Just add boiling water," he read the directions out loud. His voice awoke Ray, the large German shepherd who ruled the living room couch. Ray galloped into the room and barked at the bag of dog treats. Andrew reached into the bag and pulled out a small bone. Ray sat on his haunches and looked dreamy-eyed at the K-9 Krunchie.

"I'll make you a deal, Ray. You come with me to get a decent meal, and get not one, but two K-9 Krunchies," explained

Roberts. Ray barked in agreement.

"You're leaving again, Andrew?" asked Monique. Monique had been with Andrew since his promotion, which was a good year. She slid her arms around his waist, but frowned when the cold steel of his .45 brushed against her forearm. "Baby, please take that off. You know you're not on duty any more," she pleaded.

"Yes, you're right. But I still have to protect the half-naked goddess waltzing through the kitchen." He smiled and bit her lower lip.

He put on a light jacket and opened the front door. The blast of cold air stung his face, though it was strangely refreshing. He shoved his hands into his pockets and started to walk to the corner. Ray sprinted by him and jumped a small fence. He had already memorized the shortcut. It involved having to hop a couple of fences, but it was better than rounding the whole neighborhood.

They arrived at the small grocery store and started picking out ingredients for a baked chicken and Caesar salad dinner. He approached the counter with a basket full of fresh veggies and tantalizing meat. He laid 40 dollars on the old man's palm, and strolled out of the store.

Ray curiously nibbled at the pocket, which held the treats. Andrew held out his hand and let Ray eat the treats. He arrived at home and immediately started to throw together the ingredients. The smell awoke Monique from her nap. She stumbled into the kitchen just as Andrew was setting the table. He set Monique's plate in front of her, and her eyes lit up with excitement.

"What happened today? Have you heard about that man that was found in that alley," she asked.

"I don't want to give you nightmares. It wasn't pretty," Andrew explained.

He sat in his office and thought about the case. He knew that this was going to be swallowed by the media. He pulled his colt out and prepared it for cleaning. He slowly disassembled the slide and ran a small brush through the barrel. Then he took his officer's rifle from the closet. It was also a Colt, but it was an M15A4.

He felt a tingle go up the back of his spine. He spun quickly and found Monique leaning against the doorframe. She had concern in her eyes.

"I, uh... didn't, uh... " Andrew trailed off. He got up and hugged her tightly. "I know you don't like what I do... My job isn't to hurt people," he explained.

"Then you don't need those. They just..."

He cut her off by pressing a finger lightly to her lips. "Let me tuck you in," he said. He picked her up and carried her to her bed. He pulled the comforter back and laid her delicate body on the mattress. He carefully laid the sheets over her, dimmed the lights. She leaned up and nuzzled her nose against his cheek.

"Shhh.... Shhh.... Shhh... Not tonight. You know you're too tired for anything," he said. She laughed in spite of herself. He brushed his lips against her neck and walked out of the room. He had to go back to work in a couple hours.

"I need a shower," he said to Ray. He undressed and jumped in the steaming hot water. He didn't notice the curtain open and close. She spun him around and pressed her mouth firmly against his. "I couldn't sleep," she said.

Now it was his turn to laugh.

### Chapter 3

Andrew ran the small track near his house. He stopped by a small bench and stretched his legs. It was early enough to be dark but not pitch black. This was one of the things that Andrew appreciated about his neighborhood. Not a soul could be seen or heard for miles. He tightened his shoes and jogged towards his house. He got in the shower and got dressed. He tried to look as casual as he could; black Dickies and a small zip-up sweatshirt.

He strapped on his issue and turned toward the door. He stopped and looked around the house. He stood for a moment, almost dazed. He snapped himself out of it and jumped in the car. His car was also his undercover. It was the same make and model of a regular cop car, but with hidden lights and sirens.

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He strapped his rifle in between the seats and started down the driveway.

He arrived at the precinct just in time for the daily doughnut raid. Some of the officers joked around by putting on SWAT uniforms and running into the break room and seizing all the doughnuts and coffee, claiming they had warrants. But Andrew beat them to it. He greedily stole two glazed Crispy Cream donuts and headed towards his office. His normal breakfast would have consisted of a bagel and coffee, but hell, a few doughnuts can't hurt.

He booted up his computer and munched silently on his doughnuts. An instant messenger box popped up on the screen. It was from Monique. "You didn't kiss me good-bye," she complained. Andrew couldn't believe that he had forgotten the most important thing in his life.

"You looked so peaceful, I didn't want to wake you," he said.

"Yeah. I was pretty worn out last night," she teased.

Andrew laughed and said he'd call her later. He decided to go check out the crime scene. He needed to find out more information about his case. He pulled up to the alley at around 9:30. Even though it was light outside, the alley was still dark and uninviting. He pulled his weapon from its holster and walked into the alley. He attached the small flashlight to the bottom of his .45 and searched the area. He was disappointed.

"I need something to spark up my day," he said. He heard the loud cackle of the C-B radio.

"Attention! All units in pursuit of stolen vehicle. Suspects believed to be accomplices in multiple murders. Proceed with caution."

Andrew sprinted towards his car and headed toward the station. He teamed up with another officer and sped towards the highway. They caught up with the Corvette just as it merged on the freeway. "Wow! Beautiful car!" said Jim, the officer in his car.

Jim swerved towards the car and tried to run it off the road. They responded by shooting out of the side windows. Three shells shattered the front glass of the police cruiser.

"Son of a ... Two can play at that game." Andrew grabbed the radio and yelled into it. "Permission to open fire!"

The radio responded to his satisfaction. "Permission granted," said the operator. Andrew grabbed his M15 and set it to fully automatic fire. He shoved a clip in and pulled the bolt back. He leaned out of the window and aimed for the back tires. The loud clatter of the gun rang in Andrew's ears. One of the two shots hit the back tire, but it inflated again.

Andrew was stunned. "All right, deal with this," he raged. He emptied the thirty-round clip into the back of the car. The rear axle was torn from the body as the Corvette spun and rolled. It came to rest in the center median. They pulled up in the breakdown lane and approached the car. Both officers searched the area but all they found was a small folder.

"What happened to the bodies?" asked Jim. They sighed and waited for other officers. The folder contained pictures of the crime scene.

"What the...? How did they get this?" asked Andrew.

"I don't know, but it looks like the angle from where the picture was taken was in the window right above us. Look! They also have one with you in it. And your girlfriend!" said Jim.

Andrew was stunned. "I'll write the report later. I need to get home!" he said. Andrew jumped in the cruiser and raced into oncoming traffic. The squeal of the sirens didn't help much. He ran into his house. The front door was ajar, and the house was trashed.

"She's gone," he muttered.

**-AnonymousOne, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: Very well detailed and scripted! We can't wait to hear more from you! You have a very solid talent! Keep us mind for further stories. We hope you stay in touch once you leave the hall!**

## My Life Has Been Like This

Well first off, I'd like to say what's up to all in here and yeah I'm back for the 12th damn time. I'm actually really glad that avoiding prison was one of the topics because that's something that's been on my mind real strong lately.

I got out of Life Skills last November and I served a full year last time I was here. I got out and felt I owed it to the system to get mine, and I felt I had a lot of time to make up for.

So I got out and I started pulling madhouse licks. I mean like every few days I was doing this just stackin' up and going out blowing hella money.

Also I decided to get my hands in the dope game and was selling trees all day and pickin' up coke and pills on the weekends to make extra cash when I hit parties.

Everything was going good. I was living it on my own, paying for rent and food, I had my lady and just having the time of my life.

Well I got kicked out of my place of residence because the landlady found out I was slanging D out of her house. I had no place to go. I was homeless for a minute until I found a new place to live.

Moms wouldn't even let me use the toilet, let alone live there. So it was all on me. I kept making my illegal money and using alcohol, weed, and thizz on the regular.

Finally, hitting all of those licks caught up to me, when the cops searched my pad for my lady, whose on the run. By this time, (mostly my fault as I got her back into drugs) and ran across to duffle bags and a suitcase full of laptops, navigation systems, plasma TVs, and other electronics that I had not yet sold.

I don't know how but all I got, was a court date and they didn't bring me in. That wasn't enough though because rent still needed to be paid and slanging only provided me with the money I needed to eat, buy beef, and use drugs.

I kept hitting licks and was caught less than one minute, after I exited a house by a police officer who thought he was a detective and honestly didn't do a bad job, playing detective.

He found some coins that looked too valuable to be mine.

And why would I be carrying them?

Later a burglary was called in and all that was reported missing was these coins. (That house didn't have any valuables) So they came to my pad and arrested me. They brought me in and fingerprinted me, interrogated me and honestly I was ready to get locked up because of all the stress and guilt I was going through for pulling licks.

I just wanted to get away and now I realize its because I wanted something different or myself but did not know how to get it. I was not arrested and locked down though, due to my mom kicking me out which is illegal, CPS (Child Protective Services) got involved and the focus was shifted off of me and onto my mom.

I got house arrest pending court and they told my mom to let me move back in. So, I moved into my pad, vowing that the coin lick would be my last one, it was at that point, I feel that I changed.

I had pretty much given up on going to college and I decided to go to college again. I'm in here now because of the previously mentioned licks, but I showed up to court because I knew it was necessary to get this shhh out of the way because I know that I'm done with my life of crime and punishment because I'm a changed man.

I turn 18 in a couple months and I should be starting college in September we'll see how that goes. Well I'm out of time so until next time, I'm out.

**-Nick, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: You were living an out of control life. What were you thinking? You were taking care of business, but you are also doing the wrong thing. If you had gotten a legal job, paying rent, and staying out of trouble, you wouldn't be here. What now? It's time for you to change for real. Look a your record. Not a clean one at all. You've already been here more than a dozen times, what else are you expecting? To spend the rest of your life in here? We strongly hope that you make it this time. Although you didn't take care of things as you were supposed to, you showed up to court and thinking of getting rid of the guilt and the conflicts you have pending with the system. You are learning, growing up, and getting more mature. Go to college, get yourself a good degree, a good career, good friends, and a nice family. It's about time. Trust us! How's your girlfriend doing?**



### Yo Estoy Agradecido Con Dios y Mis Padres

Primeramente, yo estoy agradecido con Dios por estar vivo y por tener tan buenos a mis padres quienes siempre me enseñaron cosas buenas. Nunca me enseñaron una mala cosa a mi ni a mis otros hermanos.

Ellos nos pusieron en la escuela. Yo lllore para que no me mandaran a la escuela. Mi padre me dijo que si había tomado esa decision, pues tenía que trabajar para ayudar en la casa. Entonces comence a trabajar en una ferreteria y ahí estuve como por un año. Un día por la mañana, le dije a mi padre que yo quería venirme a los Estados Unidos para poderlos ayudar más.

El mismo día en la tarde, me despedi de mis padres y me vine para acá con unos cuantos amigos.

Tube que pasar por tres fronteras. En ese trayecto tube que pedir comida en México y caminar por días enteros solo para conseguir el "Sueño Americano".

A veces ni dormíamos por estar atento con la migra. Un día íbamos caminando por los rieles del tren y nos salieron como diez de la migra y tubimos que correr por media hora a través de unos pantanos.

Al día siguiente, fuimos a pedir ropa y comida en una hacienda. Un señor nos dio leche y unas chamarras. Así seguimos caminando.

Un día en la tarde cuando estábamos esperando el tren, el tren venía tan recio que todos los demás compañeros lo agarraron menos yo. Quise agarrarlo y me solté. Cuando venía la última extensión del tren, me agarre fuerte de una mano lo posible que pude, como pude logré agarrar bien del tren y seguimos para adelante hasta llegar a la frontera.

Ahí estuvimos por una semana pidiendo agarrar coyotes. Crusamos la frontera en dos noches y dos días. Cuando ya íbamos cruzando todo el decierto, nos vinieron a traer unos cuantos hombres en unos carros y nos llebaron a una casa.

Entonces estoy agradecido con Dios por no perder la vida en todo el trayecto, por estar vivo y por poder haber llegado a los Estados Unidos.

**From The Beat:** El camino para acá es muy difícil. Lo que no podemos entender es el porque tiran la oportunidad de haber llegado aquí, por algo que no vale la pena. ¿Qué les cuesta a ustedes buscar un trabajo legal y así poder ayudar a sus familias poco a poco? Los pajaros contruyen sus nidos poco a poco sin lastimar a algién. Aprendan de ellos y hagan las cosas bien. Emplecen a apreciar lo que cuesta agarrar.

### I Am Very Grateful To God And My Parents

First of all, I am grateful to God for being alive, and to have good parents who always taught me good things. They never taught me a wrong thing to me and my other brothers.

They sent us to school. I cried, so they won't send me to school. My father told me that if I had taken that choice of not going to school, I would have to work to help. So, I started working in a grocery store, and I was there for a year. One morning, I told my parents I was coming to the US to help them more.

That same afternoon, I said good-bye to my parents and headed here with a few friends.

I had to cross three borders. In our journey I had to beg for food in Mexico, and walk for entire days just to obtain the "American Dream."

Sometime we won't even sleep to be alert from immigration officers. One day, we were walking along the rails from the train, and about ten immigration officers appeared out of nowhere, and we had to runaway for a half of an hour through a huge swamp.

The next day, we went to this hacienda to ask for clotehs and an old man gave us some jackets and milk. Then, we continued our journey like this.

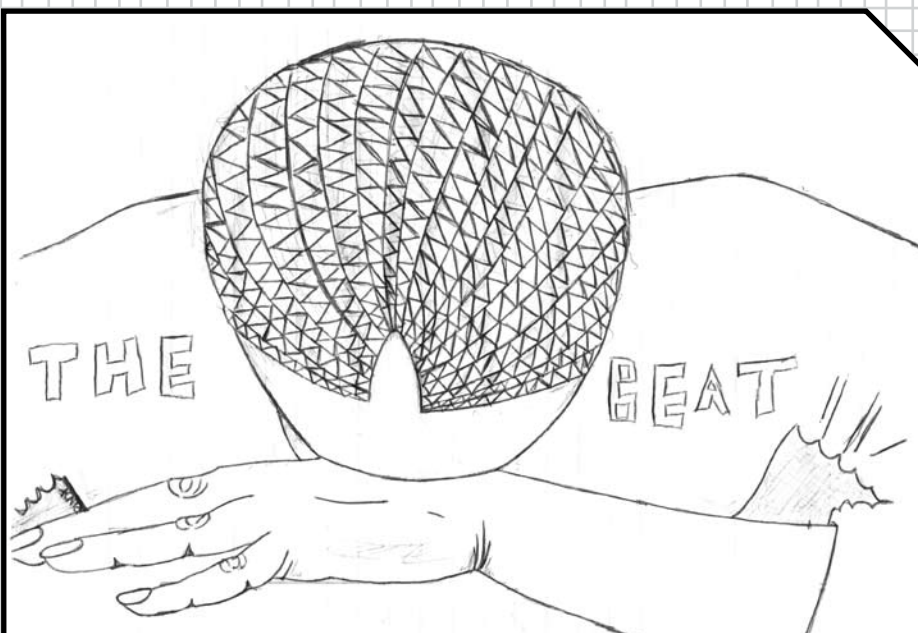
One day in the afternoon, when we were waiting for the train, a train was approached very fast and we had to jump in it. So my friends got on it, but I couldn't because I let go and jumped off it. When the last car train was coming, I held myself from a handle as best as I could with one hand, and made it. Then we headed near the destination of the border.

We stayed there for a week looking for coyotes. We crossed the border in two nights and days. When we were crossing the desert, a few guys came with a few cars and took us home.

So, now I am very thankful to God for not losing my life through our journey, for being alive, and for coming here to the US.

**-Carlos, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** The journey to come here is very hard. What we can't understand is why you throw away the chance to be here for something that isn't worth it. What's so hard in getting a legal job and be able to help your family little by little? The birds make their nest little by little, piece by piece without harming anything at all. Learn from them and do things as they are supposed to be done. Learn to appreciate what's hard to get.



*We stayed there for a week looking for coyotes. We crossed the border in two nights and days. When we were crossing the desert, a few guys came with a few cars and took us home.*

## You Can't Think You Can't Win

You can't think you can't win. I'm learnin' how to be a man. I thank the three men that helped me and the librarian too. I realize that I have a lot of knowledge and I can be somebody.

I want to just let The Beat know that your boy is gonna make a change. 'Cause I ain't tryna be a victim in this game. The street life is old and my mamma keep tellin' me I'm getting older and I can be somebody... but life in Oakland is ruff and I still got people who want to kill me.

But if I change my ways I can make it past 21 ...I must remind myself that I must return to my spot in poverty, but I'm gonna show people that I can be somebody and not just a gun totter and a weed smoker. I'm gonna get my life straight, and I know it may sound good, but just wait.

Again I thank project crisis and Ms. Amy the librarian. I'm out 'till next week to all stay strong keep yo' head up and knock yo' time out.

**-Damani, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is great, Damani! Keep a copy of this piece with you, so you can remember the promises you made to yourself today, and become the successful person you really are inside!

## A Vision of Happiness

I remember a few nights ago or was it last night?

Um, I don't recall exactly when I had this dream, but I know for sure I had this dream while I was doing time in the Alameda County Juvenile Hall.

As I was saying, a few nights ago I had a dream that I was at a banquet -- or was it the dance? It felt like the senior ball. I had a vision. A vision of happiness. I seen everyone I hung out with at school. Everyone was there, even the kids that go to schools in different schools.

**AND THEN POOF!**

I was at home; in the bathroom, just about to take a shower when I was just about to call my girlfriend and I figured, oh well, it's only quarter 'til 9:00 pm so I guessed I can call her after my shower and before I knew it I woke up in the blue mat and a hard bunk "THEY" call a bed.

I was back in the room I was assigned to. Room eighteen. This dream taught me to take as many chances as I can while I lasted.

**-Tommy, Alameda**

**From the Beat:** We hope you get back to the place of your dreams soon. You deserve a simple peaceful fun party with your friends, a celebration, without violence and stress. Make it happen!

## Real Man

Who are you, are you a killa?

Are you happy because you kill?

Do you feel that makes you a man, or better yet makes you real man?

A man don't destroy, he builds.

Who are you, are you thief?

A man don't take, he provides.

That goes to everyone including me.

Are you a liar? Why not tell the truth?

A man don't trip off the consequences, that's just what a man do.

Well you tell me which one are you? Just change yo' ways to better you.

**-Lil' New Orleans, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You speak so wisely about this topic, and at the same time, being locked up in the hall, we wonder about how you've been sticking to them yourself. So we've got some questions: is it ever tough to stick with your principles? Do you have any role models who you can look up to for this kind of behavior? If so, who are they and how did you learn? If not, what did it take for you to figure this out?

## Dreams are a Message

I once had a dream that someone very close to me died.

Inside of the dream all I would see was a lot of people crying. I was there but it was like nobody could see me. I was wandering what's wrong with everybody. I waited to know what was in the coffin so I walked up to the coffin and I tried to open it but it would not open. I felt a lump in my throat at the time I started getting scared.

I kept walking up to people asking them what's going on and who was in the coffin, but nobody could see or hear us.

I woke up out of my dream scared and wandering who was in that coffin. As the day went by I kept wondering... until I got a call from my patna telling us my best friend Andrew Porter was dead.

Ever since that day, I looked at all of my dreams as they are a message to something that will happen in the future.

**-Michael, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Wow...Do you think it's always about what WILL happen, or do you think sometimes they could just be warnings, about what MIGHT happen? What are some of the most recent dreams you've had, and what do you think they might be trying to teach you?



## Avoiding A Prison Future Through Malcolm X

Damn, me I don't know if I'm gonna be avoiding a prison future, but I now for damn sure I will try! I gonna do six months in this unit.

I know that ain't shhh. Malcolm X did 7 years. That man changed myself totally 180 degrees, from the man he was before his imprisonment. The way he changed his life, I want to use that as an example for myself in self-improvement.

Malcolm was a pimp, drug dealer who eventually became a man that followed Islam, which showed him the "light" if you want to call it that.

M a y b e we could use that as an example to follow God or whoever we believe in to become a better man.

Malcolm became an intellectual in words and the way he expressed his mind through reading books in prison. When he first came into prison, he couldn't even write his sister a letter. From that point to later on in his life, he wrote books, another example how we can improve ourselves and avoid a prison future.

**-Sean, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We are glad that you are going to take his example as a tool to fix yourself. Yes, indeed, he was a good example and a leader that changed this country in many ways; and as we can see, he also changed the minds of many people. You are one of them. Maybe coming here was a purpose life set for you, so you can become another national leader or a leader to any of the inmates that are in your current situation or will be in the same situation in the future.

## The Fault Is In Ourselves

Q-vole Beat? It's V from San Jo, Santa Clara County, I just wanted to tell everybody who reads this that if you're gonna be a G and live that gangster life, you don't have to be ignorant nor uneducated. Everybody makes mistakes. Sure there are prisons, juvies, ranches, and yes, that could hold you. But they could never take away knowledge nor education.

Everybody is their own man and woman. I only say this because I read some books and they talk about chillin' and drinking and smoking, but they find themselves coming back from that. You cannot blame it on the system, but your own ignorant self.

Well times over, so till net time.

**-V, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We admire the message you are sending, which is that educating yourself out of ignorance is everybody's responsibility and possibility. We definitely agree with that, although we also know that it's harder for some to do this than for others, often because of what they are or are not exposed to as children. In any case, it sounds like you are educating yourself, so we're interested to know how your mind has expanded, and what new visions it has generated of the world and yourself in it.

## I'm Going To Stay Out Of Prison

The way I am going to avoid a prison future is to make the right choices and choose my real friends. I'll stay out of trouble and start listening to my grandma and older brother. I am going to start going to school every day and stay out of prison. I will choose the right ways to go instead of doing something against the law I'm going to start doing what I need to do to stay up out of prison.

**-Sala**

**From The Beat:** We hope you follow through on every promise you make in this short but meaningful piece. We're interested to know if you've made these promises before, and if so, why things will be different this time?

## I Can Be A Leader

This J Newt with the block movement. What's poppin'? I got this dream that I want to accomplish. I want to make my mother and family and the other people that I know think other things about me. People think I'm just disrespectful and don't have no manners or nothing. But I'm go prove to people that I can be a leader, not a follower, and that young people can look up to me.

I want to go to college and play football and make my family happy and think great things about me.

**-J Newt, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Wanting to make your family proud of who you are is a dream worth making come true. What changes are you planning to make so that they look at you in a new way? How will you feel about yourself?

## Punishment

Being locked as my punishment has made me think about what I'm doing and makes me just wanna be cool for a minute and only do me. Getting a beating won't stop me from doing anything.

There's other ways to teach people, to punish people so they can stop doing all the bad things that they're doing. By punishing people sometimes they stop, but sometimes they don't. Sometimes they just find ways to do the crime better or they develop tolerance.

**-Inca, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We'd love to read some of your suggestions for "other ways to teach people" besides the ways that don't seem to work (like beating people). Is this the first time you've been locked up? If so, what do you plan to change when you get out? If not, why didn't this punishment work before?

## Stuck

My whole physical body, it's been controlled  
 When I sleep is when I'm put to hold  
 Without his guidance, it's like I'm walking with a  
 blindfold

He controls the body, but not the soul  
 Does the dirt, but I am left with the toll  
 No strings attached, said I'm your puppet master  
 I may lead you to success or straight disaster  
 There's days he makes my mind go 'round an 'round  
 And days he blocks off my thought and sound  
 I was born with the mind of an innocent little boy  
 Who knew I would grow up playing with heart-stopping  
 toys

The day I was born and I looked at my mothers beautiful  
 eyes

I should have known I was born to die  
 By playing this game called life with no retry  
 Trying to get a high score just to shine  
 Completing missions but really hitting up the devil on  
 this hotline

They call him puppet master and now let him introduce  
 Me to my brain that's small but deadly as a cobra loose  
 My kids will carry on my brain when I reproduce  
 Same looks, same mentality, but a new generation  
 Putting in work for the same unstoppable organization  
 Sorry to say they're gonna follow the cycle of  
 incarceration

I get chills when he breathes down my neck  
 Says I'ma hit you hard, let's see if you get your reality  
 check

Give you life in prison or hit you with a tip that's hollow  
 I will flip your own mind and your bulletin you will  
 swallow

I be trying to run and get away  
 But it's the invisible strings that make me stay  
 I have to stick with him and him with me  
 Who knows how long, maybe till eternity

**-Cisco, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You describe your world in verse very well, but we can't agree with your conclusion. No, you don't "have to stick with" anyone or anything. Each choice you make is a new one, and each choice you make could be a different one. It's not a question of "can't" as much as "won't." Born to die? We're all born to die. Dying is the easy part. It's living that's hard!

## Lightweight Juiced

Yeah, this ya boy Anto dog! I'm still in this camp, feel me. Man, I been gone too long, more than a year. I would or never thought that I would've been sitting in here this long. But you only learn from your mistakes, and if I get the chance to touch down, I gotta be smoother with my shhh. But right now I'm lightweight juiced because it's looking good for ya boy with my case!

Yeah, it's going down on the outs. Ninjas getting touched like Michael Jackson do boys. I been in this camp so long that to these females, I'm a star (LOL). I will be gone in a minute, and no more fly young ninja with the "Burgundy Dreds."

But to all my ninjas, man, be easy. Do you. Gettin' out this shhh a piece of cake, but it's only the first step because they trying to send me to the ultimate stage!

This is a signed document by Anto what's poppin' with the females? Gone.

**-Anto, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You're right that getting out of here is the easy part, only the first step in a much longer journey. But since all journeys start with a first step, we're eager to see where your journey takes you. What is the "ultimate stage" where they're trying to send you?



## I Thought I Was Untouchable

There is no way that being in jail is a punishment. To some people it might be, but to other people it an eye-opening situation, like for me.

I was one of the girls that was on the street thinking I would never go to jail. I was doing everything thinking I was untouchable I was selling my body for a man I thought I loved. Then I stopped going to school, stopped looking for a job, and I stopped seeing my mom as often I should. I started using drugs, and then it all went downhill.

Now when I get out, I might have a criminal record, but if I do, I'll just do what I have to do to get out the system. I will not do drugs anymore. I'm going change my life for myself, my kids, my mom and the love of my life.

**-Danniqua, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope the "love of your life" is not the same boy who put you on the track, because he will always be a boy and never a man. (No man would so disrespect a woman... and no woman should so disrespect herself!) If this experience is not punishment to you but, instead, a wake-up call that you will answer, then it's worth it. Just don't forget the promises you're making here.

## Another Month For Trial

What's up with The Beat? It's Grimy. I'ma tell you what happen today, June 10, 2008. Today, I had trial, and they continued the trial 'cause supposedly the DA was not ready. But what's the hell up was that? They made my trial date another lousy month, but I ain't mad about that. The thing that I am mad about is I had a pre-trial about one month ago and we were setting my trial date and that is today.

So I go to court, and the witness doesn't show up. So I thought that they would drop the case, but no. The DA has the right of law to ask the judge that if he could get a lil' bit more time so the witness could come and testify. So the judge said, "Ok, why not?"

So then my attorney interrupted and asked if I could get the right to release for home detention. But the DA interrupted and said I am the person that shot a gun into a car and that I am dangerous to be back on the streets. The judge signed the release, but then started to talk to me and said that he don't know if I am guilty, but he did say that if I didn't have the charges that I do have, I would have went home and fought my trial in the outs. But since I didn't, I have to wait another month.

But to tell you the truth, the only reason the DA is really doing this is because he wants me to take a deal. But I'm not that stupid. But anyway, that's what I had to say until next time. Late!

**-Grimy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for writing the details of this frustrating court experience. Sometimes, we think that the criminal justice system is designed to teach people to wait, and wait, and wait... We hope your confidence that you can beat this case comes true, because sometimes taking a deal is the smartest thing you can do. But then again, other times, it's just what you described — a trick to get the longest sentence for the least work. We're pulling for you.

## A Better Future

What's up with The Beat? Can't wait until a ninja get out. When I do get out, I'm gone be looking at a better future. I might be on probation, but that ain't gone stop me from what I want to do. After I get my diploma, I'm getting a city job, then my own place.

What else could I say.

**-Lano, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What else could you say? You could fill in some of the details of this fine-sounding plan. How much do you have to do to get a diploma? What kind of job do you hope to get? What kind of a place are you looking to rent? The more details and examples you can give us, the better the piece.

## Sixteen Times

What's poppin' with The Beat? This that ninja Tray. I'ma talk about avoiding prison. I'ma keep it KI, ya dig. I'm just sittin' here waitin'. It took me sixteen times to realize that I hate this shhh, and when they let me go, I'ma play by the rules, get off probation, get this summer job.

I kept getting in trouble 'cause I'm so street. I gotta keep the goons cool 'cause they dropping like flies out here, man, and we all we got, ya dig.

Y'all know I'm gone do the damn thing, go to this lil' program so I can get back to bein' me, ya dig, dawg.

**-Tray, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It seems like you might think that you can keep a foot in both worlds without falling. You're dedicated to doing the right things to keep yourself out of here, but you're also committed to your "goons." Be very careful because you can lose all that you work for in the blink of an eye.

## What Do Your Dreams Mean?

What's up with The Beat? Y'all know who this is, man. This that ninja Mike writing out of the big dawg unit, man.

Damn, thug, I been having some maney-ass dreams, fa real. Like two nights ago ya boy had a dream that he took a couple to the chest. It's a maney because that's not the first time I had a dream like that. All that's telling me it's ninjas out there tryin' to stop me.

It's really telling me something positive and negative, fa real. The positive part of it is that it's telling me that I need to change my life around and get out this shhh. It's also telling me I need to always be on my shhh and never lay my cards down.

The negative part about it is what I said earlier, it's ninjas out there tryin' to take me out the game. I really ain't worried about it 'cause they tried to do it before but it did not happen. I'm go be on my shhh though 'cause I am not tryin to get knocked off.

That's all I got to say this week.

**-Mike, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You say that "they" tried to take you out before but failed. But what we want to know is, what's different about now than before? Do you see yourself changing up some things that will make this threat less likely to happen? We think if you take this recurring nightmare as a warning, and make the changes that you know you have to make if you want a better future, then it's all positive.

## This Is To The Streets

This is to the streets and the block I rep.  
And to this day that I enjoy and for a peaceful death.  
This is for the youth, young bucks with snotty noses.  
The thugs on the grind for they loot, most of them posers.

Look over here, we got wall and fallen soldiers.  
And old folks knockin' on doors praisin' Jehovah  
I rep my culture 'cause my surroundings made me  
Growing up broke like glass, my hood raised me  
Look I gotta represent it for all my peoples,  
Them gangstas hitting them switches in Bentley Regals  
With desert eagles to my good and all my people  
My uncle was locked down maximum state from slangin' kilos

I never been there but I can't help cut this, I'll cop that  
Now my boys' scared and he's telling me all to stop that.  
But naw I'm going to represent it with credibility  
With anthems made for the streets.

I hope ya'll feeling me.

**-Espo, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Another powerful, lyrical anthem. One day you may not only represent the streets, you may elevate them.

## Something To Make You Think

I just got off the phone with the damn wife! She was telling me how she really feel 'bout me. Some of the stuff she said was she love me 'cause I'm the only ninja outside her family that put up with her shhh, 'cause every now and then she get mad over anything, and 'cause I don't disrespect her or argue with her.

And now, after she told me all this shhh, I feel like I'm really needed by her. She told me other shhh too, but I'ma keep that between me and her. But that shhh feel good to know you loved fo' doin' the right thing, feel me. That shhh got me thinkin' though, 'cause I been messin' with her since March 8, and this the first time she ever told me some shhh like this.

She the type of female that you would wanna change yo' life around for. I knew her for around eight years, and this the second relationship I had wit her. She basically read her letter over the phone, but she been wrote it but she never sent it, either 'cause our recent arguments or 'cause she was on some shy shhh. But she don't wanna send it 'cause she think I'ma use it against her or somethin'. But she the first female that really just keep it all the way real with a ninja, and you know I'ma do the same.

But I went to court for my lil' 707 hearing, and get the outcome Tuesday. So I'm writin' this early just in case. But this shhh got me sittin' here thinkin' 'bout my life and what it's gone be like, 'cause I can't let my guards down when I get out, and I can't hold it up 'cause I'ma get locked back up — and that's how I lost her the first time.

Now, they probably gone send a ninja to the Ranch, but I'm really ready to stop doin' this hot shhh, and get back on track. But they ain't gone understand what I'm talkin' 'bout if I tell 'em the Ranch ain't gone do shhh but waste my time.

I been to Glen Mills already, and that's the so-called best placement, but they really just judgin' it by the cover. They think I'm lyin' when I degrade it, but they really don't know how it is to actually spend 18 months in there every day.

The staff basically hide all the bad shhh about it, like when it be tours and shhh, they call the classes and tell 'em so they can make everybody do what they are supposed to do. And if somebody tell the whole truth about the school, they get in hella trouble. And if that was to happen, I bet CPS would be investigatin' instantly.

But they got it to where if it do happen, ain't nobody gone believe it. And the person that'll do it gone be the one messin' up the most. And it ain't gone be no need in somebody that's doin' good to say something 'cause they probably gettin' out.

But I be writin' all day. I'm out.

**-Young Dunny, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Well, you definitely put the time into this one! We won't comment on your "wifey" situation except to say that we applaud your decision to stop doing what leads you to lock-up and start doing what will make that relationship stronger. As for the Ranch or Glen Mills, you're the expert, so we wish you would spend some time running down the particulars of what works and what doesn't work in both programs.

## Summer Dreams

Kicking rocks on the block  
 telling all the OG's I'll be coming for ya spot  
 when you not looking hot cooking  
 mama got it on the kitchen table  
 I thank God we was always able

to, get the leather couch big screen cable too  
 I even had a dream or two  
 Some sort some stepped on  
 but we kept on,

many nights I thought I heard ninjas running  
 thought I saw the cop lights  
 thought I heard ninjas gunning

But I was dreaming  
 And when I woke the junkies was still flending  
 And I had dope so I had hope,

I know you saying it's wrong  
 But I'm not talking to ya' child I'm talking to this poem.

**-Li' Seag, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Your skills are unreal/the flows they make us see and feel/the world in your visions/the why behind your decisions/but dope is a slim rope/to try to hang onto your hope/you need better for yourself/for your body and your mental health. Peace.

## An Everlasting Feeling

I would have to say I am one of those people who holds on to those everlasting feelings once they hit my heart. Growing up not having love given to me, I search within a guy to find that wonderful blossom called an everlasting feeling to me.

Change is very important. I believe it's something I need in order to change that path. I dream of living a life of luxury, sitting on top of my wealth, hoping and praying for the better soon to come.

I would have to say future references and goals would have to be going to UCLA. to train to become a forensic analyst.

My path will be so much better when I release negativity and strain in positive so I can make a positive impact on family and friends. In the end the best everlasting feeling is the feeling of a positive young woman.

**-Deasha, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We agree! Someone with your youth, attitude, and smarts can do anything she wants to in life. What is your plan to get to college? Is there a teacher, family member, counselor (or even your R.O.) who can help guide you on decisions such as which classes to take now, or taking the SAT test? If not, seek out a mentor.

## Reporting From Your Hood:

The good times in the hood when it ain't no funk. Nobody getting killed, throwing block parties, going out wit' the homies to different amusement parks or just getting out the hood for a certain amount of time. Or when the block is rollin' and everybody is getting money and when me and my ninjas ridin around getting' high, enjoying the music.

The bad times when one of my homies get killed and we got to go to a funeral or being at a candlelight and ninjas come and try to shoot it up. When my ninjas go to jail with no bail and when we got to wear RIP shirts. And when me and my ninjas got split up another bad time in the hood when 5-0 hit or when 50 beat yo' ass in a backyard and when somebody family member dies...

**-Clarence, Alameda**

**From The Beat Within:** The good times sound really nice. Thanks for painting such a vivid picture of something the newspapers don't talk about. And, although the bad times you write about are so difficult and sad, you write very well about them, painting a clear picture there too. Anything you can imagine would help make more good times and fewer bad times?



## Key To My Heart

I had closed the door to my heart and wouldn't let anyone in  
 I had trusted and loved only to be hurt but that would never happen again  
 I had locked the door and tossed the key as hard and as far as I could  
 Love and trust would never enter there again, my heart was closed for good  
 Then you came into my life and made me change my mind  
 Just when I thought that tiny key was impossible to find  
 That's when you held out your hand and proved to me I was wrong  
 Inside your palm was the key to my heart, you had it all along!

**-Chunks, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Love is one of life's biggest mysteries. Sometimes, when we think we'll love someone forever, time takes its toll and our passion wanes, and we don't know why. Other times, though — as in your poem — we think we're done with love, until we're hit with that special chemistry that cannot be predicted or defined, only enjoyed. We hope you and your love will again be together so that you can do more than just write beautiful love poems.*

## Life

A counselor here asked me a question the other day. He said, "What do you think, Bunk?"  
 "About what?" I replied.  
 "You know: Me, you, just what do you think in general?"  
 I didn't really understand, so he said he would ask me again later. So I meditated on it and figured out it was a question about life. I came out of meditation with two answers:  
 1. Each of us is really very small (in the bigger picture), and  
 2. All you need is love.

**-Diesel, Marin**

*From The Beat: Man, that was some deep thinking. Why do you think that so many of us forget these two things? Knowing we're small just makes the world we live in seem bigger, more beautiful, more meaningful. And we think we "need" bling, or street cred, or sneakers — when what we need is — like you said, love. Be sure to share your next post-meditation wisdom!*

## A Rough Life

A young man fifteen and he fight this serious case man  
 Murder is the case and ten what he facing  
 He gotta hold it down 'cause it ain't no time to cry  
 He is stressing bad because his life is on the line.  
  
 He gotta stay solid and hold his own ground  
 He try to stand tall but the devil pullin' him down  
 He never thought he have the heart to knock a ninja down  
 Mama told him what goes around comes right back around.  
  
 He pray everyday to get out these bad fazes  
 He a great dude but in a real bad situation  
 He know it can get badder only if he make it, it's sick  
 How a murderer get more time than a rapist.

**-Jamarco, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Nice piece. As you often do, you are write vividly in a way that puts a picture in our mind with strong images. You got good flow overall, and the story of the piece is so deep. We can really feel your heart in this one. We are curious about your last line: sounds like you think a murderer, who takes someone's life, shouldn't get more time than a rapist, who seriously attacks someone but does not take their life. Please tell us your reasoning behind that.*

## Mota – Vation

When I wake up in the morning I need to smoke some bud. Before you know it your day is gone. When you smoke so much you're high isn't that good any more, so you want something better.

I moved to alcohol and cocaine, it all made me worse. I couldn't stand being around people because it made me pissed.

I always thought about murder, I got a 12 gauge shotgun, and pointed it to my head. I wanted to kill someone so bad, I was even thinking about killing myself.

I asked myself one question every day, why would I want to be stuck on stupid, when I could have the best life. You make life the way you want it.

**- Lil' Pewee, Land Of Enchantment**

*From The Beat: We at The Beat are grateful that you didn't use that 12 gauge shotgun, and now that you know what drives you crazy it's time to stay away from alcohol and drugs. As you stated "Make life the way you want" Don't make your life the way other people want.*

## Going To Prison

Going to the prison is always on mind because I'm always messing up on the outs. This stresses me because I don't want this for myself, but if I do ever go to prison, it's life.

When I drink I do crazy shhh, and when people mess with me when I'm drunk I just get heated and I'll beat the shhh out of them and I don't stop until I see they're knocked out. And that worries me because I could do this to someone and I might kill them and I might get caught up and the system will give me a life sentencing. And I'm going to spend the rest of my life in prison. And that's not where I wanna spend my life.

I want to spend my life with my family. But the thing that could take me away from my family is my anger, my drinking problem, and gang banging. But I'm glad because the system is recommending an alcohol program so I'm not really trippin' about hurting someone. But gangbanging is always going to be in my life because I'm proud of who I am.

**-Pelon, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: You recognize the problem and now you must face the music if you want to correct your problem, the anger and the drinking. Step up to the plate and make a big different in you, before you are on the bus to prison for doing something you will certainly regret. Again, stop being a child, put down the rag, get out of the lifestyle it will mess you up, drunk or not.*

## Suffocating

Suffocating, in the shadows,  
 searching, for the light...  
 chained to constant contemplation  
 nothing close in sight.  
 Wishing, only for a breathe of fresh air,  
 soon becoming desperation...  
 consumed.

This was written during incarceration. I believe that punishment by detention works because it causes one to think about their mistakes and because they, like me, hate this place so much that all they want is out. All I do is sit and hate my mistakes even more!

When I get out, I'm just gonna drop all the old shhh finally, which I probably would have still been out doing. I just hope it's sometime soon!

**-Nina, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: This piece is especially cool because you analyze your own writing and reflect on being locked up. Utilize your time to think and write to the best of your ability.*



## What Your Dreams Mean & Some Shhh About Punishment

I'm not really sure, but dreams are bittersweet, like flying, then falling. But I don't dream that kinda thing. I dream more like seeing best friends that you know you won't see anymore. People like those kinda dreams. I don't. They just make you hurt. Those are the dreams I have in here, or, dreams of my dad fighting me.

So I just read 'till I see daylight. Then I let myself sleep, because then I won't remember some bittersweet lies. That's what dreams are - your subconscious lying to you for some mean reason. Maybe to punish you, like this place is supposed to.

Now about punishment, that doesn't do shhh. It makes you rebel more. Getting beat makes you slightly more immune to the pain, the hurt, so each time, it's easier. So you take it. It makes you hurt, and hurt turns to nothing but depression, or the crazy need for revenge. So, if someone stabs someone, then you lock 'em up. You're hurting them. They take it. They come for you. So, watch your back.

**-Muriel, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a fascinating piece. You have an analytical mind. We don't necessarily agree with your conclusions, but we certainly respect the power of your brain. Regarding punishment - we'd love to know what kind of 'punishment' would have a healthy affect on your behavior. The type you've experienced doesn't seem to get the job done. What would, in your opinion, be the best kind of rehabilitation for a minor who breaks the law? We really want to know what you think.

*I cry extremely loud but I do not  
make a sound  
I'm a diamond in the ruff  
waiting to be found*

## Diamond In The Ruff

I'm a diamond in ruff the waiting to be found  
All my life I've been over looked pushed and kicked around  
I wonder if you hear me I can see you walking by  
I've seen the children playing and I've seen the women cry  
I want only to be yours and my queen you will be crowned

I'm a diamond in the ruff waiting to be found  
I pretend I've been discovered  
I fulfill somebody's dreams  
But life is not a mirror  
It's not always what it seems

I feel like I've been laying here for many years  
But I can't keep track of time  
So I keep a track of tears

I cry extremely loud but I do not make a sound  
I'm a diamond in the ruff waiting to be found  
I understand my value and the person that I am  
I never say the words I can't I only say I can

I dream that you will find me  
And hopefully you will

I try to shine and shimmer  
Because it's my strongest skill

I hope today's the last day that I'll ever say I've frowned  
I'm a diamond in the ruff waiting to be found

**-Eugene, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This diamond is polished and ready to sparkle - are you ready to shine in life the way you shine in this poem? And what steps would help you get to that point?

## Dark Days And Stormy Nights

The raindrops fall, then the lightening hits  
Barrio raised, dark days back in this

In my dreams, it's fatal... I die with about 20 cuetes in my face

Then I see my tombstone... Welcome to the cradle to the grave

Influenced by Pancho Villa, Pablo Escobar  
Cesar Chavez, Jesse James and the rest that's hard

My nose on froze, venom runs through my veins

My eyes roll back into my head, come feel my pain

Satan, it's time to pay for the sins that got us messed up

Take a trip with me through the barrios of America

Pit bull bite and shake and don't release

Locked up in a cell just like a beast

I'm like a flower that bloom through concrete

Chale, homeboy, I can't stop till I become deceased

Heaven wants me but I got kidnapped by the fiery depths

Diablo is dead, so I'm on top next

Look into my eyes of a true demon with homicidal intentions

Been down for too long - not even my soul or family I'm missing

**-G Shadow, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We're particularly interested in your list of 'heroes.' When you mix drug kingpins and killers like Escobar and Jesse James with revolutionary thinkers like Pancho Villa and Chavez, what are you trying to say? Chavez wrote: "Our conviction is that human life is a very special possession given by God to man and that no one has the right to take it for any reason or for any cause, however just it may be. We are also convinced that nonviolence is more powerful than violence." This is the opposite of your message, so what are we missing?

## Life...What You Don't See

When you look into my eyes all you see on the outside is an innocent cute girl, but what you don't see is the pain and evil in the eyes that can easily deceive you.

The first time behind these walls was when I was 12 years. Now I'm 16 and I'm still seeing and doing the same.

After four years of being in and out, I finally realized the pain and guilt that I put upon myself, but most people don't see an ounce of emotions I wish I can express from drug dealing, gang bangin' and getting high every day. It all gets boring to most people. It can be a surprise, but that's the truth, even though fast money, cars, luxury, and feeling like a million bucks, all feels like you're on top of the world.

In the end when you're sitting in jail thinking about your life that's gone by you should think again.

If the life of being in the dope game is the life you should continue, will the money, cars, luxury and feeling like king or queen last forever? Or will it crumble down when the people you thought had your back now became your worst enemies?

As the game continues on, you go down and someone else comes up. Having the biggest sack doesn't mean you have everyone's respect because what happened to me can happen to you. So stay true to yourself and say true to the game.

**-Brittany, Durango, Maricopa, Arizona**

**From The Beat:** Brittany, what drives people to risk their freedom? Is it wanting immediate gratification? Unfortunately we see that many people who committed a criminal act seeking fast and easy wealth or power, find themselves waiting for days, months, years to start over again. Most of us have desired immediate gratification at one time or another. We have to ask ourselves each time, whether we gain more by "waiting" on the outs, living life with many opportunities or "waiting" in lock-up with limited opportunities? We also would like to know more about your experiences and what you have learned from the choices you have made.

## On Reading, Writing, And "Father"

What's good with The Beat? It's around 1700 o'clock. My young dunny I ain't seen in a minute. Locked up. But you know a ninja like me. All I write is hits.

So, uh, look, I'm readin' this book "From A Hard Rock To A Gem," and this thing openin' my eyes. A ninja could write a book 'bout my life and get guap straight up.

But that shhh I wrote last week...

What happened is it was my birthday. I turned nine. A week before that I got suspended for a day, and my mom called that ninja and told him. So he came by, talked to me, and asked me what I wanted for my birthday. I told him, and the ninja didn't even call me and tell me happy birthday.

Then, last Christmas, I'm 17 now. He asked me what I wanted. I told him clothes or money. So he asked what I wear and what sizes. So I told him, and ain't talked to the ninja since. The only thing he did give me was some of his pants, but I left 'em at this house on purpose. I really took that as disrespect.

The only reason I probably even know the ninja is 'cause he payin' child support, and moms had to go to court for that. So that song is gone reach him. I'ma have two copies, one in the whip slappin' and I'ma give him a copy and dip off on him. And the grimy part about the birthday shhh is I was a young ninja really expecting something from the ninja and came up empty-handed. All I asked him for was a remote control car.

But now, I don't know if that's the reason, but I like drivin' and I keep getting' caught up for stolen cars. But now I'm YND (Young Ninja Disrespectful) shhh. I ain't tellin' the ninja happy birthday, Father's Day, and I ain't goin' to the ninja funeral. I'm allergic to fake ninjas. I'ma hold my own, ya dig. I wish the ninja would try to come in contact with me again.

**-Young Dunny, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We're sorry the man who calls himself your father is so irresponsible, and hope that when you became a father, you will know that being there for your children is what makes a man father. Congratulations on discovering that books not only open up worlds, but can earn you money. Next time you're tempted to steal a car (and put yourself back behind walls), sit down and write a story about it instead. Rather than jail and pain, you might get money and fame!*

## Lately I've Been Having Bad Dreams...

I can't remember the last time I had a good dream.

Lately I've been having bad dreams and sometimes I don't want to sleep for fear of my dreams 'cause when I'm asleep I can't tell whether I'm dreaming or not. Most of my dream happen with me being shot in the middle of a rival neighborhood or saving one of my homeboys life. I also had 2 dreams when I was in my cell and the devil was coming after me, but I couldn't get away 'cause I was in jail. And then my room was flooding, so I start dancing 'cause that's my worst fear... I'm dying.

But the worst one I've had was one day I was dreaming I was outside speaking to my brother and all of a sudden I stabbed him to death. I went to his room after I realized what I did, and sat with a picture of him and was sad apologizing to him. Then I woke up sweating and mad 'cause I had a dream like that.

**-Sergio, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Dreams are crazy... do you think these dreams are trying to tell you anything? About your deepest feelings, fears, about the stressful parts of your day? Maybe it's just about listening to them, and understanding what they have to tell you, and that might help the nightmares ease?*

## Being A Statistic

I'm go write about that shhh they call statistics. I'm tired of that shhh. They say most people that get out of jail will end up right back or dead. What's up with that shhh?

Why a statistic can't be that most people that come to jail turn their life around and get a job, or some smooth shhh like that? I know when I get out I ain't comin' back. I'm go be on some smooth shhh, get a job and be under. I refuse to let a ninja kill me.

So for everybody that come to jail thinks like me, that bs-ass statistic'll change. So I'm out of here Beat.

To the people that be leavin' comments, don't even leave no comment. I don't like the shhh y'all be sayin'. I'm out man.

**-B.B., San Francisco**

*From The Beat: Statistics are no more than mathematical formulas that reveal a general picture, not a particular prediction. That means that you are the master of your own statistics, and you can defy their predictions. If you end up coming back, it won't be because "statistics" said you would, but because you got caught up in something new, and that is up to you. As for our comments, they are a part of every Beat contribution. It all part of the same package...*

## Dreaming Of My Own Restaurant

My dreams mean a lot to me. I remember when I had this dream that I had my own restaurant. It was really weird because I always wanted to be a chef, because I like to cook.

I had a dream where I was about in my mid-twenties and my restaurant was in New York City. My restaurant was an "all special" restaurant, I like to call it, because it served a bit of everything. I did not see the name of the restaurant, but a lot of people wanted to eat there. It was a very popular place for people who wanted a variety of food.

I really hope that this dream is a sign of something amazing that is going to happen to me in the future. If it does come true, I hope all you will come there one day and eat some of my good food. Thank you.

**-Migdalia, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Wow! What an awesome dream. We hope it comes true and that we can come check your restaurant out. (You'll remember your old Beat Within pals from back home, right?!) What's the first dish you'll make on opening night?*

## Jail is Not Cool

For all you youngstas out there: Jail is not fun. It ain't cool, this shhh is depressing.

When you first get here it dawns on you what you did, and when you get in that small ass room you think about all the messed up stuff you did in your life. You think about your family and all the people you disappointed how people will look at you differently and how you can't do what you want when you want.

Also in here they treat you worse than an animal. You are forced to sleep in the same room as you use the bathroom and if they make you, you will in that same room. My dog will not shhh next to where he eats and sleeps... now think about that! I'm just tellin' you because I don't want you to have to deal with this kind of stuff.

It is hard to be locked up and find out your pops died that shhh hurts. I got to spend the next 6 to 9 months in a group home for a robbery that took less than a minute.

**-Nyle, Alameda**

*From the Beat: We're so sorry you lost your dad, and so sorry it happened while you were locked up. We really hope someone reads this piece, and feels the power of your words and the message you are bringing. Most of all, we hope you remember their power too, so you can keep striving for that freedom you deserve.*

## Hurting People

I hurt a lot of people when I failed my group home and came back to the halls. I'll even hurt a staff that works at the hall. I hurt a lot of people like my mom, my girl, they was disappointed in me that I didn't take advantage of my freedom. So I'm back in here 'cause It was selfish not thinking of people.

I'll hurt if I go back to the hall. I was just thinking about myself that was real selfish of me, now I know this time when I get out I'm going to take advantage of my freedom time.

**-Baby Joker**

**From The Beat:** There are so many people in this world who spend their lives trying to help youth like you to stay out of jail and to stay from getting killed. The decision is yours to reward them for their hard work and that's simply staying free and alive. We only have one-life to live- don't waste it in jail or in someone's grave.

## My Goal In My Future

When I go home I'm going to do the best I can tryin' not to come back here. I really think if I go home I could do better in my life than I am now. I have a goal to go to school, finish, than move on to college.

I really hope I complete my goal one day and show my family I could do it. I would like to study cosmetology because I like to do make-up and own my own business.

**-Future Cosmetologist**

**From The Beat:** Best of luck to you as you pursue your dreams!

## Just One Of "Them" Days

Just one of those days when you walk down the street and cars pass you by everybody's happy

then you see "yo" friends or sister in one of these cars, you wave them down and you get in wit' all the wrong intentions,

did I forget to mention, living your life by a simple price, selling your soul, but not making the profit.

I think today is the day I will stop it.

Free my soul from my enemies.

I'm free, new, with a clean slate.

**-Edniqua**

**From The Beat:** Beautifully said. It is your slate to write on... (meaning your life to live as you wish to). We hope that you keep writing and keep reflecting on life.

## Punishment

Man, I've been in jail for several month now, and I don't know when I can see my family.

I pray to God every night to see if I can get out soon. For what I see, he says NO cause he want to punish me so I won't do it again and I thank Him for that 'cause I will not do that again

I do not want to stay away from my family and show a bad example for my lil' sister and lil' brother. I tell this from my own experience it ain't nothing in those streets but death, punishment and going to jail, then you will see yo' mom for 2 or 3 hour then when she leaves it hurt you and her. So go to school when you get out. That's what I'm going do so I won't come back!

**-Devon**

**From The Beat:** What is it that ticks in a person's head of that in which is wrong and that in which is right when one go to jail? What needs to be implemented out here to stop not only troubled teens but also people from going to jail? What is it that distracted you from your role as a role model to your little brother and sister?

## I Had a Dream

I had a dream and it was a pure image

In my life I never seen one be so vivid

I woke up crying like maybe I'm trippin'

Somebody was dyin' and I saw the begging

I was like "what!?" I didn't know who it was

All I seen was some guns, and a girl full of blood

Whoever it was, I didn't want to find out

The next thing I know, I'm at my cousin's funeral Layin' there I was froze, like my cousin's really gone

And if I would have known, man I don't even know

All I know is she's gone, and she's not coming home

Man, it's a shame because we grew up together

But the truth still remains that the change made me better

All I can say is that I miss her everyday

Yeah, she gone. It's ok. I still love you, Janae.

**-Kamaiyah**

**From The Beat:** At what point did you realize that you had grown and become a better person as a result of your cousin's passing? Did it take a long time? We understand from your piece that you had a dream about her death before it occurred. Have you had other dreams that predicted something that then happened?

## Thinking Of My Freedom

This your homie Chikillo. Shhhh! Well, I'm not feeling none about this topics but, shhhh! I'm still here- hella mad! I was supposed to leave like 1 month ago, but it's cool. I just waited until they come pick me up. I'm just here hella bored, in the room thinking of my freedom, about all the homies in the varrio. I can't wait 'till I be back out there kicking it, smoking blunts. Well Beat, Alratos.

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** Kicking it and smoking blunts doesn't guarantee you success or a freedom pass out here. If you're tired of being locked up, "hella bored" as you'd put it, maybe you should change your ways and the things that landed you there in jail in the first place. Wake up!!!

## Being Here

Punishment to me is being here.

This punishment is not normal to me,

this is a different world to me and I don't like it!

I'm going to try my best to stay out this dimension.

I'm not going to be selfish this time

I'm going to not think about myself but other people too.

**-Baby Joker**

**From The Beat:** Juvenile halls are designed to discipline youth for conduct that's not that of the law. The controversial juvenile justice center has been a question mark in societal eyes for many of years but yet it still stand. The only way to get rid of something so inhumane is by decreasing the recidivism rate of those who can sometimes call that place home.

## My Dreams

Hey, what up Beat, this yo boy Young Painless. I had a frightening dream. It was about homeless people chasing me and beating me up on the streets. I think it's trying to tell me something.

As I woke up from my dream I started to sweat a little bit, I think when I sweat it means that there's a lot of thing's going on inside my dreams.

**-Young Painless**

**From The Beat:** Dreams are mysterious like that. It's often complicated to know if dreams actually hold subliminal messages or is it that just the mind playing tricks with human. There's something going on in each one of us that most of us don't desire to be going through, but when you dream about things, such as you dreamt of, that means you have a lot on your mind and your mind is trying to figure those things out.



## Reality

Reality just hit me  
I finally woke up  
To all the girls who are reading  
I know it's really rough  
Knowing you can't control your life  
And you can't see your "boo"  
But if that boy really loved you  
He'd be stressing too....  
I was once fifteen years old  
Looking for love  
But now I realize all I need  
Is the man who's up above  
I ran from myself and the truth  
But working for a man  
Who doesn't love you  
Isn't the path to choose  
I'll be eighteen in five weeks  
I wish I was fifteen again  
I hurt my soul and my body  
Tryin' to get in where I fit in  
It's too late now to do what's right  
And get my childhood back  
So all you girls who have a chance  
Get your life on track

"Trust me B.G you will regret it in your future..."

**-Pray-for-me**

From The Beat: Thank you for sharing these words of wisdom with The Beat.

## Can't Wait

What's good Beat? Well this Dimplez once again. Yes, I'm still here. I can't wait until my court date cause I might get out.

I know when I get out I'm gonna do good. I said that before, but this time I really mean it because it's time for me to change and stop playing around. Get my shhh together. The way I'm gonna do that is listen to my Mom, finish school and get a job. Because this is not the place for me. I don't want to be in the system all my life. I wanna be different from my family members, and prove to them that I can do it and show them that my Mom didn't raise me to be like this.

Well Beat, I already made my point, so late.

**-Dimplez**

From The Beat: When you say that you want to be different from your family members, do you mean your family at home or your street family? What do you see them doing that is destructive or that you want to avoid? You name a few things that you plan to do differently this time on the outs. Which will be the hardest?

## Punishment

I think jail is not a good way to punish people because everybody's privileges get taken away, like talking to your family, eating what kind of food you want, and wearing your own underwear.

I am going to avoid the prison future because my juvenile record is already kind of messed up, so I know by that time the judge will look at my juvenile record and see all of my robbery charges, he go send me there.

**-TJ**

From The Beat: Any place where one is surrounded by 4 walls or 4 gates for years to come isn't good on the mind of not that of only human but whatever else that happen to suffer from such inhumane circumstances. The judge, the D.A, your P.O haven't done one day behind a steel bar but yet they are quick to sentence those to something they don't guarantee of positive effect; (Prison that's being.) How are you going to make someone feel something you yet haven't felt? How are you going to sentence a man to death if you haven't yet met death?

## Less Punishment

My idea on punishment would be ease up on us kids eighteen years and under. Because we are not yet adults, and we're still learning and growing. We should be at home growing and learning. We should also be punished at home.

For example: getting grounded or probation, but not getting locked up for a thousand years. I mean yeah, if you did something as bad as murder, you should get locked up for a while.

Lectures are another thing. If you get a lecture, yeah you might do it again, because you block out what your mom, the police, and what your dad say. So you might go back and do it again.

The law is harder on kids, I believe, because we are the future. So punishment is punishment. You got to take what you get. You make your bed, lay in it.

**-Haley**

From The Beat: You raise some interesting points in your piece. Should juvenile halls exist at all? Would most of the kids in juvy benefit from punishment at home, or would this be "too soft" and allow them to continue doing dirt? What about all the people who profit from the construction and administration of juvenile halls. Does this industry thrive at the expense of children's wellbeing? You are our future, as you point out. What message do you think the law is sending to kids?

## Punishment

Harsh words, and continuous beating

You're heart is now bleeding

Arguing and disagreements that leave you bleeding

Is that the way to treat any human being?

Dishonest and hurt with no one to trust

You've been hit so much you no longer trust

Busted lips, and swollen eyes

All your life you've been deprived of your will to survive

You no longer feel alive

You just lay back and pray that today's the day you die

Hurt

You've lived your life with silent cries

No one stops to ask you why

At times you pray that today's the day you die

But you know that's out

So what's life really all about?!!

**-This savage lyfe**

From The Beat: You tell us! What is life really all about? Why do we live in a world where such suffering can exist? The will to survive is so strong. Can the heart heal as well?

## I Need My Freedom

I wish I never came to jail because it gives me a hard time when I'm in here, because I've never been in here for this long.

When I'm in here I get a lot of room time because I'm always doing bad things and I hate when I'm in here because I cannot see my mom.

She do come to court. I be mad cause I cannot leave with her. But I think if I had listened to my mom and stopped running the street I wouldn't be in here right now.

So next time I know to listen to my mom and stop running the street. All the things my mom was doing for me, I should have just listened to her and not run the streets, so this time I'm going to stay out of here and not come back because I need freedom, all of the freedom I can get.

**-Troy**

From The Beat: That's the right attitude to have. Remember, she's been here before you and she taught you most of what you currently know. A mother's love is too strong to lead her child astray.

## My Mom

My mom has always been there for me. She put clothes on my back, put a roof over my head, made sure I ate every day and night.

If I would have listened to my parents, I wouldn't be in a place like this. I would be at home eating whenever I wanted to and not eating this nasty shit up in here. I would have my OWN privacy.

So since I did what I wanted to do I came home late every night, and sometimes not even coming home, worrying my mom a lot.

So that's why I'm happy my mom and family is there for me while I'm up in here stressing because if she wasn't, I would have a hard time when I'm up in here doing my time.

**-Lamont**

**From The Beat:** Parents should know best for their children. Your parents don't sound like the kind of people who'd lead their children astray. Next time be proud that your parents decided to give you another tool in life called "advice and knowledge." Let them know you appreciate the love, give it right back to them!

## Dreamin' (Breathe)

I am a Nubian queen, walking with my back straight and my head held high... I have no worries, at least none that scare me such as the punishments of being a whore. I live in a home that I feel comfortable living in, my fridge is full and my furniture is my favorite colors: purple and red.

And when I walk outside, I am not afraid that this day may be my last... Going to jail or getting killed is the last thing I'm thinking about. Money isn't a problem, my bills are paid and my bank account is filled with more than enough. So now I can enjoy the sun and how it bounces off my skin and smell the fresh air... and finally I can really breathe...

**-Pray4me**

**From The Beat:** You dream a dream of peace. Freedom from the violence, stress and control that come with working the streets. We hope that you achieve this dream. Life is never worry-free, but you deserve a life of independence, ownership of your time and possessions, and most importantly, the freedom to express yourself.

## This Girl and That Girl

I just got out of a relationship with my girl that I've been with for one year and six months and I'm ready to move on. I'm going to do me until I get out.

Well I just talked to this girl that I used to go with in the 8th grade, T, today. I think that I want to go with her again. After the first time we went out we became best friends after we broke up. We've gotten to know each other more when we became best friends. We shared everything together. She helps me with my troubles.

I'm willing to give us another chance but I need to find out what she says about it. I'm not trying to get serious with her because I just came out of a serious relationship. It still hurts me but I got to move on.

I know they both are gone be there for me. I trust T more. I can't trust my ex because she a liar and I can't stand it no more. It's good for me to take a break from her because I get more freedom.

I tell T more personal things then I told my ex.

**-Lil' Kev**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you have started looking at what makes a person more trustworthy than another. When you've been friends with someone for a long time you can get to know more about how well they'll stand by you. Still, it seems like you are moving pretty quickly, since you just broke up with your girlfriend of more than a year-and-a-half. If you were to advise another person in your place, how long is the right amount of time to just chill between girlfriends?

## He Died In My Arms

Well, me and my bra Dave was real close and we was beefin' with this hood real hard and we had to get down on one of them to show them we ain't playin' these days, but when we did, they were on rims and they were talking on the phone sayin' they gone wake us.

Then, I went in the store and I heard gun shots, I run out side and seen these ninjas in a car shootin', then I pull out my glock and start to shoot at them, then I look at my brother he was on the floor bleedin', I was holding him 'till he passed. Love always RIP DAVE

**-Lil' J-Tuda**

**From The Beat:** Looking back, was it worth it that someone that was real close to you is no longer here? If you could take it all back would you and if not- why not? Would there ever be a solution to end the gang violence that has taken over our/your streets? RIP Dave. We are sorry for your loss.

## My Punishment

I'm here because I got caught selling dope and I went home and I had 10 bags of weed and two police came to my house and the took me from my house and I went to juvenile hall.

When I get out I'm going to take care of my mom and my sisters and help her clean the house and the bathroom and the rooms and I ain't going to talk back to my mom or my sisters and I am not going to come out the house if my mom don't let me come out then I won't. I will stay home and go on the computer and I will never come out because I'm on Myspace and I will slap some music and eat some good food

When I go out I'm going to go home and go on the computer. And I'm going to say what's up to my sisters and I'm going to take a shower and go to my girlfriend's house.

**-Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It seems as if you got a plan for yourself. We hope you stick to your plan and make your mother happy. After all, would you rather listen to your mother instead of some staff who enjoys bossing people around? Stay focused!

## Reality World

Man, the things I did to get me up in this place, I regret 100%. Not only because it messed me up, but because it also ruined my whole family and the one dude I gave everything to. I'm not gonna continue to kill myself over it, because what I need to do is learn from the mistake and always understand where I went wrong!

After I work on that, then I'm gonna go to my boyfriend (probably my ex-boyfriend now) and work things out. But if he just gonna fight the fact that I'm gonna explain my part to make things right for the both of us, then I'm not even gonna try and waste my time. That just be one less dude I gotta deal with.

To all them other females who thinks it's all cute and everthing to cause trouble with your family and the law: it ain't cute! Y'all don't know what you can lose. Because I know what one thing is, your family. Just like how I lost all mine.

Mom, I know you hate me so much and don't want nothin' to do with me, but just know, I still always love you.

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** You should feel good about the fact that you are reflecting and planning, preparing for the relationships you are gonna need to figure out when you get released into "reality world". You are wise to start with yourself, too. Forgiving yourself for what happened and moving on are the first steps towards finding the inner strength to pursue a new path. Then you're ready to make peace with others.

## What's Up

Q-vole Beat. Just here on the unit doing good. My homies out there in the varrio doing good too. Shhh some of my homies are in here in JJC and the rest of them out there in the varrio, keeping it big, while me and my homies are in here doing time. But we getting out soon hopefully, 'cause we tired of being in jail.

I want to get back in the hood to be kicking it with the homies. Shhh, two of my homies are going to ROP. We going to be in there for a minute, but we just gonna kill our time to be in the varrio with some Jainas and the homies. To all, keep it trucha we be out soon mucho love to all.

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** Maybe before you were to get out it'll be wise to stop and think of that in which put you here in jail initially, and put that negativity out of your life. One of our greatest downfalls is peer pressure.

## Avoiding a Prison Future

If I was locked up in prison for life, I would probably ask to sit in an electrical chair because what's the point of living when all you're gonna go through is pain and suffering? So I would rather rest in peace than live a life in pain and misery.

Or, if I was afraid of death, I would try to make the best of it in prison forever and try to keep myself happy if I could. But I don't think that is gonna be possible to do that.

**-Michelle**

**From The Beat:** There are many-many people who discover peace, wisdom, and grace while serving life in prison. Don't believe us? Sad to say, just flip to the back pages of The Beat Without!

## My Dreams

Last night I had a dream about my homie that past away.

I had a dream that he came to the hall but he got younger ...he is really like eighteen or nineteen. My dream was that he got younger and was in the hall. I seen him in here but it was weird because I already knew he had pasted away.

When I finally realized it I woke up. When I woke up I was like what the ...! It wasn't normal to me. I thought it might be a sign because I had court today. It turns out it might not of been a good sign because I might have to go to ROP.

I believe that this is where he might want me to go because it might of better for me. It's probably going to help me from harm and all that fonk. RIP FLACO

**-G**

**From The Beat:** Powerful piece. Maybe your dreams of him were from a younger, more innocent time in your lives, before you both came to harm and "all that fonk." We hope that this dream and its power stay with you.

## Back

What's up Beat, I been lightweight cattin' off Beat, 'cause I came back on some bullshhh. I was out for like four and a half months. I don't know what the judge gone do with me but I put myself in this situation so I'm gonna thug this shhh...feel me though.

**-Lil' Skittles**

**From The Beat:** We're glad to see your writing (though sorry you're back in jail.) What happened out there? Were you doing pretty well and then one thing went wrong, or was it more complicated than that? Dropping the thuggin' out, and work through this period from the heart! Forget frontin'!

## The Person I Really Am

I feel like this time being in the hall is different. Instead of feeling sad, and scared of what the judge will do I feel mad and stupid. You only get so many chances and I messed up two of mine. Now I'm back for the third time with nothing but my prayers.

Luckily, I have a boyfriend and a mom who supporting me every step of the way. That makes my time here a little better. Hopefully the judge will give me, once again, another chance and see me for the person I really am.

**-Kay T**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get that chance, and that regret you feel right now might help you strengthen your resolve to be sure you don't ever come back.

## What Driving Me Crazy?

What driving me crazy is all the fake people because they think they are running stuff. This staff that be talking hella stuff but that's all they know what to do. That drive me crazy. I don't know. I think because I never around people that act like that.

But there a lot of things that drive me crazy. This my list of things that drive me crazy:

That I can't see my kid  
That I can't see my family

Fake people

People that talk a lot

This place

The staff

My anger

Loud people

People that think they hard

Ugly families

These are ten reasons that drive me crazy so wi't that I will let you go.

**-Lil' Sosa**

**From The Beat Within:** We can really understand how these things would get to you! And as we go through life, there's often a lot we can't control, and that's even more true when you're locked up. And while you can have some impact on a few things here and there, the only thing you can really do anything about is yourself. This being so, is there anything you can work on, in yourself, to make it all more tolerable? Do you have any effective ways of handling your anger? Or frustration?

## Dreams Equal A Wake Up Call

What my dreams mean to me are signs that happen in the future or something. It's kind of like a wake-up call, sort of, to watch out or if it's a good dream, it means that something good is gonna come my way. I love having the good dreams because it's something positive. Dreams sometimes are really weird because you're with people you have never seen and your talking to them like you've known them all your life.

**-Michelle**

**From The Beat:** It's true, dreams are a trip! We hope that you will write another piece about a dream you had: a good one, a wake-up call, or just a super weird one.

## I Should Be Cool

What's good Beat. This is ya' boy Lil Tay, still up in this thang, missin' my boys and my "fam"! I go to court on 6/19/08 and that's the day I'm gone see if I'm goin' to the hut or to placement, so I been thinking a lot. I haven't went skits in a few months so I should be cool.

**-Lil' Tay**

**From The Beat:** We're happy you've been healthy for a long time... What do you think it is that has helped you be so successful these past months, and how can you keep that with you in the future?



## This Time

I'm here because I pulled a lick with some guy and he got caught and snitched on me. I'm not sure if he's doing time but I know I am.

This punishment has made me realize a lot, like being away from my family; I know how important they are to me. Also another thing it made me realize is this is not the place where I want to be. When I get out, I'm not going to come back.

**-Dominic**

**From The Beat:** That's the right attitude to have concerning jail. Stay far away from that place because it's only evident that they aren't playing by a fair rule book. Don't you ever let prison become your last result such as that of so many.

## My Mom

G-vole Beat. Today I'm gonna talk about my mom. Well shhh! my mom being there for me in hella shhh!

I love my mom hella lot.

This the only time I been without my mom.

I been here for hella long and I miss my mom shhh! I don't want her to be crying no more cause I hurt her a lot already.

So when I be back with her

I'm gonna be with her hella lot and sometimes with my homies even though my mom don't want me to be into gangs, but I can't do none because once you in there, there's no way out.

So I'm just living my crazy life everywhere but I still love my mom she mean a lot to me. I love you mom! Much love!

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** Loving your mom sometimes means getting out of the way of your own self to receive her motherly nurturance. Sometimes you must choose between your homeboys and your family. YES, you can walk away from danger and the lifestyle that brings this pain! Show some courage!!!

## Death

Death, pain, misery, sorrow

Will I ever see tomorrow

The pain inside that I feel

Is something you don't want to borrow.

**-King Of Pain**

**From The Beat:** You sound really low. We don't know your story, but it sounds really tough for you right now. Is there anyone you can talk with that you trust?

## Dice

I had a dream that when I got out I went back to Richmond and me and my brother hit a lick on a house in Richmond. My brother got shot two times in the head. Then next thing I know I was in the park shooting dice.

I think it means I'm go to lose my last brother. Because I lost two brothers and they both got shot so if I am having dreams about my lil' brother getting shot then I might lose my little brother.

**-Sac**

**From The Beat:** Your dream sounds really upsetting. We truly hope that it does not come true. We have another way of looking at it, and we'd like to run it by you. Maybe you won't agree with us at all, but check out this possibility: Maybe your dream is saying that when you go out and hit a lick on someone's house, you are "rolling the dice." That means, you never know which way the dice will fall. Someone could get shot. That also means you have a choice—rob houses and roll the dice, or don't rob houses and stay safe. It sounds like you have had a lot of big losses in your life already. Why not start making choices that will keep you and the ones you love alive?

## Some Quotes

A quote from a book: Le Thi Diem Thuy

"In Vietnamese, the word for water and the word for a nation, a country and a homeland are one and the same: nuoc."

The Dream Shattered:

"Giot mau dao, hon ao nuoc la, mau chay, ruot mem."

Translation: "A drop of blood means more than a pond of water. When blood spills, the body hurts."

"Tram nam bia da thi mon, ngan nam tinh ban van con tro tro."

Translation: "In a hundred years the tombstones will wear out, but in a thousand years, friendships will not be obliterated."

Hieu- cares for a parent who cared for him or her as a child.

(kind + caring)

**-Hieu**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sharing the wisdom of your culture with us. We hope that in your life, the kindness and friendship of the second part win over the pain of violence and spilling of blood.

## You Better Be Careful

I don't know how I feel sort of like I'm off a pill

Forgot to pay a bill Lil' Jp that's me

And I'm trapped in hell without bail

Got caught with some pills

Trying to get me for a 211

Now that's all ya feel

This is Lil' Jp am I'm waiting to get out to do what I do I'm deadly like the flu

You better be careful 'cause I'm contagious too

So that's how I feel weird in a way

Sort of like I was punched in the face just another day in the hall

A lot of my family just came in the other day

But hey what can I say they just fall in May.

**-Jamoni**

**From The Beat:** Nice rhymes, Jamoni! They leave us wanting more, hopefully the next batch will give us something to be hopeful about, and not you going back to your old ways!

## What's Driving You Crazy?

What's driving me crazy? Sitting in here thinking about the time they about to try to give me. I won't be able to be with my family for a very long time. Also I been here for too long looking at four walls and being in here on my family members' birthdays.

Another thing that's driving me crazy is being in here wit all boys, no females, getting no action. Not eating what I want. Eating this nasty ass food, having to wake up when they say wake up, go to sleep when they say go to sleep. Having to abide by strangers' rules and being around people I don't know and don't like. Also knowing that my brother is in here not getting treated right, not getting respected. That's what drives me crazy.

**-Clarence**

**From The Beat Within:** Sounds like you got plenty to drive you crazy. It's a tough thing being locked up, missing out on life on the outs, and especially when you see a family member being disrespected. On the inside. Now, knowing what you know from being yourself, if someone else was in your place, what would you recommend? Does anything help?

## Dreams Make the Time Mean Something

What's up with it Beat? This is your boy Lil' One from Hayward dropping you a few lines. Well dreams to me are wonderful. They make the time when you're sleeping mean something to you.

'Cause if you don't dream its like a waste of time ... so to me dreams are things to be remember. They mean a lot to me bad or good it doesn't matter to cause I'm not wasting time.

**-Lil' One**

**From The Beat:** The worst way to waste time of course, is to come to jail... Have you found any inspiration in your dreams to help you find a way out of the lockdown cycle?

## To A Special Girl That I Love

I know this girl that I'd really love to make my wife one day. She's so special to me that she makes my life so crazy. I don't know why she makes me feel like that.

I just can't wait until I get out I am going to ask her to marry me because she is the girl of my dreams. She already has my child in her life. But I want her to know that I love her with all my heart, that every night I pray to god that she is safe and my child too.

I love this girl more than myself. I will do anything for her. I never thought that I would fall in love with a girl in my life. But this girl is so special to me that it would hurt me a lot to lose her. That would be the only thing that would scare me because I really love her she means so much to me.

So when I get out I am going to get my life together so that I can take care of my wife and kid because she told me if I don't stop she is going to stop being there for me. So I got to do it for her, to show her that I really love her. So with that I will let you go.

**-Lil' Sosa**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like this girl is really in your heart. She is standing up for herself and for your own best interests by telling you she's not going to stick by you if you keep messing up. It sounds like you are going to take her up on her request and try to get legit, and we think that's great. Now you gotta find the part in yourself that wants to change for yourself, so you can truly take control and be a man as you change, not rely on her to keep you on the path. May you have the strength to follow through and take this relationship, with her and with yourself, to a whole new level.

## Gay Marriage

Gay marriage I ain't got no problem with gay marriage ...if that's what they want to do, do that. Just don't bring that shhh to me. It's all right, but if you bring it to me, it's gonna be funk season.

I'm going to get out one day. I've been down for 365 days and this can't hold me forever.

**-Spwarv**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like your ideas are pretty much oriented towards "live and let live." But if someone came at you, couldn't you just politely let them know you're not about it, and move on?

## Prison Time

For some ninjas like me it's too late to avoid the pen. I'm in the max unit so most of the ninjas here are going to the baby pen or the pen. Then it be some who getting them snitch releases.

The only thing the system could do to help me is help me graduate and give me a early release.

**-ABCg Keith**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you're going to be in for a while longer. Anything you've learned since being in the hall that will help keep you out next time?

## A Bad Hood

What's up wit' it Beat. Today I am goin' to write about my hood. In the hood is where people sell drugs to little kids because they don't got no heart. A lot of people don't like this hood because there is people out there goin' crazy shooting at people for no reason. A lot of the time it's because there is a clique that people don't like because they are doing a lot of things. People are scared of this clique.

**-Lil' Sosa**

**From The Beat Within:** Sorry we had to get rid of the specific neighborhood you talked about. We gotta do it that way. This sounds like a really rough place to be from. Why do you think people shoot at others for no obvious reason? Are they mentally ill? Trying to show they are powerful? Is there any way you could imagine keeping the little kids from starting drugs, even if people are trying to sell to them?

## No Mo' Girls

Girls out here ain't solid. I had to learn that the hard way. Me and my girl been together for one year and seven months, and I thought I had everything I needed. My family and a sexy girlfriend. Since I been in here everything changed. She acts different now.

When I first came in I was getting letters like three times a week. Now I get letters once a month and she always makes excuses when I call. I mean she was the one for me. We been through a lot and I ain't never felt this way about any girls. Since me and her don't go out no more I'm not planning on getting serious with any other girls.

**-Lil' Kev**

**From The Beat Within:** Sorry you're having to deal with such a disappointment from someone you thought you could trust. It's really hard for relationships to stay solid when someone is locked up. Is there any advice you can give to others after this experience? What signs might you look for next time, when you're deciding whether you can really trust someone? Another thing to chew on, is taking a better look at yourself and not falling into the traps of being incarcerated and feeling helpless.

## My Dreams?

My dreams mean to accomplish them, and talking just to be talking. I'm going to make something of myself. Not just be another thug in the streets doing wrong.

My dreams as do be a real estate agent or to major in business and own my own restaurant, night clubs, and rec centers for kids. Or might want to own my own basketball team and build my own school name after me. You know, doing something positive with my life.

**-C-Gas**

**From The Beat:** We like your ideas of positive things to do with your life. If you take these dreams seriously, they could help you keep yourself away from temptations that will lead you right back to being locked up. What choices can you make now to get you where you want to go in the future instead of prison?

## Eighteenth Birthday:

I spent my eighteenth birthday up in here locked up in my room. Birthdays for me was getting high and kickin' back. Crack open some syrup and chill with a lil' chick that's gone take care of you right.

Hop up in that thang on four wheels and just stunt like it's my birthday 'cause it is. Yo' birthday is yo' day to wild out and let people cater to you ya feel me? And they can't do nothing but respect it.

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** Sorry you had to spend your eighteenth birthday locked up. That's extra bad. Was it bad enough to go legit when you get outta here and make sure you don't have to spend your twenty-first locked up too? We hope so!

## Won't Be Enough

I can give you praise all my life and that still won't be enough.

I can tell everybody my story and give credit where's it due

but that still won't be enough.

I can go to church and catch the holy ghost, and I still feel like that won't be enough.

But I really want to thank you God 'cause you really have done a lot.

Thank you very much.

**-Lil' New Orleans**

**From The Beat:** We here at The Beat can really appreciate a man who appreciates his life so much. That goes double for a man locked up in the hall. What a spirit you must have inside you, and that spirit has the potential to carry you far. Is there anything that could possibly come close to being enough in praise of God for this life you have? Are there particular choices you make through which can you honor God and yourself as you move forward in your life?

## Having One Epiphany

When I came in this jail I had an epiphany.... I start telling myself I'm not going to let these streets get to me.. And say Forget this shhh and screw these streets and I'm still ain't gone miss a Beat.

**-Czerney**

**From The Beat:** How are you going to get away from the streets - because yes, if you can find a way to stay above the drama, and stay safe, then you can rise up and succeed. But how? Do you have any ideas?

## My Theory About Dreams

I think some dreams can be hinting you to keep you away from something like when you have a bad dream it can be giving you a clue to stay away from a person or it could be telling you to stay close to that person you dreamt about cause some things bad going to happen.

Now if you having good dreams it could mean the opposite like if you have a dream about having a whole bunch of money or getting that girl you would never imagine looking at you that could mean try your luck or it could something good's going to happen to you. You keep doing the things you're doing. Maybe I'm lyin, that's just my theory.

**-G-weeze**

**From The Beat:** We like hearing your theory. Do you think the hints that dreams give you, like to avoid a person or a situation, are things you might be able to tune into in the daytime too? We believe that the wisdom that tells you something in a dream might be easier to get to than you think. If you slowed down enough, maybe you could start to use your own internal wisdom to lead you the right way, and help guide your choices in life.

## Wrong

Avoiding a prison future sounds easy but it's not. Didn't plan on coming here but look where I'm at? And when you get out be on probation and any little you do, you get put right back in to the system.

For people who haven't been in the system you read the bible and do the right thing like Spike Lee. And if you do come in the system when you turn eighteen you gone get on probation and you got to do it.

Live life the good way hang around the right crowd and not the wrong people.

**-Jb**

**From The Beat:** We feel you. It's not easy to stay out of the life that's just normal life for so many young people in the system. But you have some good advice there. What in particular makes it hard to follow that advice yourself? What helps you stay on the right path?

## Juvie Doesn't Help

I've only been juvenile for a couple of times and I feel like not many programs and placements they send you to can help you, especially if you're around your peers who are into the same violence and are doing the same things you did to get in trouble.

I don't think going to a placement makes someone change especially if they're around people just like them. If anything, when they come home they're even better criminals and they've learned how to not get caught in their robberies, shootings and hijackings, whatever floats their boats.

**-G-weeze**

**From The Beat:** We hear what you're saying. It's a problem. What would you recommend as an alternative, to help people change their outlook and change their ways?

## My Dream

My dreams mean different stuff. From death to rebirth to sports to victories.

My dreams start with a beautiful woman and she's the love of my life. We have three kids and we live in a two-story house and I'm the wealthiest man on the block who owns his house and land. My wife is the best lawyer in this town and she's always beating cases but never too tired to cook, clean, or do the household jobs that a woman can only master.

**-Sydy Bo**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you're dreaming about a really nice life where you have a satisfying family life and also some power in the larger world. What things can you do now to make these dreams come true, without risking being locked up for the rest of your life?

## Dreams

Most of my dreams are about what I have on my mind all day. Because I'm angry a lot in here my thoughts are evil resulting in evil dreams. I think my dreams are telling me killing people is not really a bad thing.

I once had a dream that I was flying on the back of a t.v and who ever was inside of the t.v must have been important cause everybody was watching me. I fell off the tv when I was trying to look and I landed on a house. But I didn't die. Crazy huh!

**-Lil' Chris**

**From The Beat:** This is a mysterious sounding dream. Do you have any ideas about what it might mean? We agree that anger during the day can certainly translate into anger in your dreams. We'd be curious to hear one of your dreams that you think is telling you it's not so bad to kill people. That must feel pretty strange to wake up after one of those.

## I Hate

I hate people that try to force you to do something. I hate people that say do this or if you don't you got to do this.

Mostly people that come in wit they little programs or it could be staff. Staff always try to force you to do something by saying do this or go to your room. Or people that come in here wit they program and say if you don't want to participate in the program go to your room. I hate them people.

**-G**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you are tired of being told what to do. You're probably even sick of the Beat Within telling you what to do. We can understand that. So, imagine you were in the place of these adults who are responsible for making sure you don't get into trouble and maybe even trying to help you make positive change in your life. How would you recommend managing thirty guys who are locked up, without doing it the way you hate right now?



## Nothin' Like Dr. King

Wake up in the middle of the dream,  
 Terrified sweating and crying,  
 Pistol under the pillow --grab it  
 'Cause I just pictured myself dyin'  
 Start shooting at the walls  
 While I let the tears fall,  
 I open my eyes wide  
 But there's no going back to sleep at night.  
 I had a dream I had a dream  
 But it was nothing like Dr. King  
 You damn right I had a dream...  
 I had a dream  
 But it was nothing like Dr. King.  
 Last night I had a dream  
 I was at the fair with my chick  
 And he was with his chick at the fair with his six  
 He had on all black and his hair was in twist  
 Beefing from way back middle school in the sixth  
 Watching his every move 'cause I know this ninja's real  
 And leave me slipping I know this ninja will  
 And he did caught me slipping by the Ferris Wheel  
 Let me have it right there by ol' baby mama  
 He just kept busting and my heart kept thumping  
 But I wonder why  
 'Till I opened my eyes petrified  
 start sweating and shhh  
 ....still thinking I was hit.

-Lil' Dougie

**From The Beat:** The images in this poem were so vivid and real that we were afraid we'd have the same nightmare when we went to sleep. You have real powers with your words - and skills that could take you to college and beyond. Use them!

## Jail Ain't That Bad

Man I usually write a rap or freestyle something but I'm here to tell ya'll jail ain't that bad. I been to jail a few plus times and camp a couple times. At first I use to think jail was going to be this bad place where we fight everyday and people get stabbed but it ain't.

I make my time much harder, that's what it is. If you just do your time and stay out the way then it will be cool. Since I been at camp I done pass 5 programs that I'm in. I pass the high school exist exam and everything. So jail ain't that bad do your time and get out.

-Lil' T

**From The Beat:** Good advice - especially that last part about getting out. But the problem is that once people get out, they don't always stay out. What are you going to do to put the "free" back in freestyle and stay out?

## Life For Real

What's happening Beat. This your boy once again in this thang. Ninjas in this thang tripping, talking about they can't wait until they get out.

Man you ninjas ain't missing nothin'. It's dumb ass dry through the town. The town gone always be the same on the real. You ninjas need to pimp this shhh and keep it lit.

I had to slow it down, recognize life for real, but I'll never stop getting money.

-Lil' Rio

**From The Beat:** Seems like you got one foot in and one foot out. How you gonna slow it down, recognize real life, and at the same time continue in the game by getting money? Unless we're misunderstanding you, it sounds like you think that money is more important than you are, than your true freedom is. And if that's true, then you're always gonna end up locked up, either in prison or in your mind.

## Punishment

Today a preacher came to the unit to give us a word of God. Telling us how to change, how to turn our lives around to God and for us to think positive even when things are going bad around you.

People think just because they ask God to forgive them, they won't receive punishment, even if they just killed someone, robbed someone, or even tried to hurt their parents. When I was younger, I didn't know much about God, just when she did something wrong she ask God to forgive her, and when she got something good or was happy, she thank God, but now since I'm in here and now that I'm going to God Squad, I see and realize why I'm here. For all the stealing, for all the lying, for all the times I smoked weed, and drank and when my mom asked me, I said no.

The judge asked me did I commit the robbery, I said No. Now the punishment.

-Jp

**From The Beat:** Great faith inspires great action. Do you feel as if connecting with your faith and belief is helping you find the strength to do and act right in this world? Do you think that strength will last in the future?

## Avoid a Prison Term And More...

Well just don't get caught.

Feel me, get you a boss team and don't get caught.

Step yo' game up, lose most of yo' patnas.'

Cause everybody got some patnas that's lightweight soft.

So just shake 'em off and work with yo' real boys.

The game ain't for everybody, false pride ain't gonna get you nowhere;

But with a life fulla regrets, with a team full of boosie cats and something hot in yo' chest.

That's a dead son for moms.

So you cats with one foot in and one foot out, fall back

and just think 'bout yo' predicament, 'aight?

'Cause the only thing you gonna end up doing is harmin' yourself,

Puttin' yo' fam in danger and switch on a real ninja. So keep it real, ok. It ok, you wasn't meant to be a factor...

-Hollow T

**From The Beat:** It's true: When people try to keep one foot in and one foot out, they fall, 90% of the time. They get killed, caught up, sent back, separated from their children. But the ones who decide to be true to the so-called game, then the odds are more like 99.99999% fallen. Dead. In Jail. Or so changed by the violence that it's like they're dead inside. Is that what you want for yourself?

## Dreams

What's up Beat? It's Dopey from Hayward once again. Since I've been here I've had a lot of different dreams from hanging out wit' family to doing things that could get me locked up again, or chillin' with the homies and some females.

I hope some of the dreams come true, but not all. I also had dreams that came true the next week or so. I think dreams can mean things that you have done or will do, or even fantasies.

Sometimes I wake up in a cold sweat thinking about the hood or family. All my dreams were true, so I can wait for what the freedom life brings me in 36 days. To all locked up, keep yo' head high!

-Dopey

**From The Beat:** We have our prayers out to you as well, hoping that you hold on to that freedom, and keep that freedom. You're as big as your dreams and bigger than your nightmares.

## Meaningful Dream

My dreams mean a lot 'cause it's what I wanna do...like I want to play basketball when I get older and that's my dream.

One of my other dreams is that I want my daddy to come back... I know that's not gonna happen. but that's one of my most dreams I want to happen.

I just want to see my daddy again. Man we used to go hard, and now he gone so I gotta do what he wanted me to do. That's overcome my obstacles and be an outstanding citizen, which means be in school, have a job, and take care of my priorities and take my career as far as I can take it. But my dreams will come true 'cause I'm about to change my life and leave the Hood and be an outstanding citizen.

**-Von**

**From The Beat:** Your love for your dad really shows through here. Just imagine the pride in his eyes, if you achieve all these things. You will be keeping the best of him alive and honoring his memory.

## Still Here

Que-vole Beat, I'm still here locked up, waiting to get deported back to Mexico. If the immigration don't come and get me, I'm going to get a year in juvenile hall. So keep your head up everybody.

**-Goofy**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get your freedom, both from the system, and from this lifestyle that is hurting you and your family. Maybe in your next piece, you can tell how you came here from your country and why?

## In The Hood

When I was out in the hood I was getting money.

Money was coming to me every day and every min. I was also putting my ninjas on too, so they can get some of the money I was making.

My logo for the hood is "If I got it, you got it." That's just how I am. After I pulled my all-nighters I went right to my girl's house to sleep. I was all good until one night after hanging with my ninjas I was on!

I called moms and told her I was on my way on my way there, I got caught by five-o in a car that had got carjacked, plus that I was on the run... so you know they beat my ass.

Well this is J Baby, and I gotta go. I'll holla at y'all later.

**-J Baby**

**From The Beat:** All this generosity and loyalty you feel to your boys is good, but if the money's not legit, you are actually putting both you (and them!) in danger of losing life, liberty, or both. What if you took those good intentions and moved them in a legit direction?

## Jail Ain't Cool

Man I thought I would never see myself in jail

First time in here feeling sick as hell.

Straight to the Y to swallow 18 months

Single myself out and stay away from the punks.

No more tears I show no remorse

Get mad and kick on the doors.

Welcome baby Kristen into this worthless world

Praying that hopefully DJ gets right with his girl.

Up in my room saying free Teddy

Naw, don't do that man swear they ain't ready.

**-Young Teddy**

**From The Beat:** Teddy, you have more power than that: The world is as worthless or as worthy as you make it. What are the things that make your world worthy, that bring you joy?

## Avoid Prison

To avoid prison in the future, when I get out, I won't do what I used to do, like rob people or carry guns on me. When I get out don't be around the same people that I use to be around. Listen to my parents. I'm not smoking or drinking no more because when I do drugs it make me do things I don't wanna do.

**-Jesse**

**From The Beat:** We know a lot of people who are serving years of time just because of things they did on drugs. On the other hand, a lot of people drink or do drugs because it helps them deal with stress. Or because it's "fun". Was that the case for you? If so, how do you plan to have fun, and how to you plan to deal with stress?

## Just Me

I'm me and I don't expect you or anybody to understand me. Despite what others say I know that without the army I can be all that I could be.

Thanks to what I've been through, I know that I can make it in life without living life on the streets. Thanks to my circumstances I know that I don't have to look, help is already in front of me. It took five years of my life, but unlike others I can say I was blind but now I can see!

**-Lil' New Orleans**

**From The Beat:** Why do you think it takes so long for people to really feel their own deeper kind of power? That's not about guns and all that? Why do you think it takes people so long to pull themselves out of the life they been leading and make other choices?

## Camp Versus The Hall

I'm at camp now. Its cool, the first two days I really didn't like it. I wanted to go back to the hall at first. But a few days later I got used to it.

But some times I be wanting to go back. Like at night time. Cause you could barely sleep in here. Food over here is the same.

The best thing over here at camp is that you have to work up to a certain level, and then you start getting home passes. But well this place is better then the hall. But that's only if you don't make it harder on yourself.

**-Lil' Rikki**

**From The Beat:** Camp does give you a chance to work your way to more freedom. Plus there are a lot of programs. Do you do any of them? Have you learned anything from them?

## Dream

My dreams mean to me/my future every time I dream it's always something real in it. And everything I dream it comes true sooner or later and that's every time.

But it has to be real  
it can't be no I'm flying one day  
and run into a building.

My dreams be like shooting or getting shot  
you either a victim or suspect,  
and ain't no money in one spot of the board game  
I'm the king so I move around  
and dominate in my game.

I'ma new person every day  
I never have the same agenda feel me?  
I got respect for my self so I don't  
need no respect from nobody.

**-King Tonio**

**From The Beat:** That's a good thing, to have respect for yourself so you don't stress off how others are with you. At the same time, you sound like you're still pretty into "the game." So if you really respect yourself, how you gonna get outta the game and make sure you stay free, make sure you stay on the outs?

## Who I Be

Lil' JJ you already know who it is  
Just got outta camp from doing six  
Been out five months up to no good  
Stripping everybody in anybody hood  
Block still rolling  
Granny still holding  
Mama still blowing  
Dum shaka my head  
brain fell out  
I'm damn near dead that.

-Lil' JJ

**From The Beat:** Sounds like one messed up situation and a tough family to come up inside of. What things can you do for yourself to keep your head together in the middle of all that?

## Punishment

Punishment don't work 'cause people gone do what they want when they want and what ever they want regardless what the next person say or do.

A person will change if they want. The next person can't change the person. They got to want to change.

-ABCg Keith

**From The Beat:** We agree that we can't make people change-a person has to want to change. Otherwise it is not going to happen. Having been in the hall so long we know you are sick of it. Maybe you've made a change inside that'll help you stay on the outs. If so, what can you recommend to help people see change as a realistic option? If not, why isn't being locked up enough to keep someone from doing the same things again?

## I Don't Care

Life ain't been easy for a thug lately  
A ninja been in and out of jail  
Going through hell  
Punk police got me locked up in a cell  
Man this thug life is crazy  
Robbing shootings stabbings,  
It's all like a big action movie  
But I don't care  
'Cause if I die I'm gonna go to thug heaven  
I want tp be known who ever in my path down  
But I don't care  
'cause I'm a killer at heart.

-Jamil

**From The Beat:** No Jamil, you are an artist at heart, a teacher at heart, a writer at heart. You care about your future, and you do have a future worth caring about. But you have to believe it. Do you?

## It Gets Old

What's good? Today I'm going to write about how I realized that I need to stop getting locked up.

I been coming to jail since I was a young teen, and I'm 17 now and between those three years I been to the hall numerous times. I'm tired of this shhh 'cause it gets old -- and plus all this time in my room gave me time to think about what I'm gonna do when I get out. And all the staff I got to do to stay out.

-Lil' Marcus

**From The Beat:** Good! Tell us more about what you plan to do?

## These Dreams

I believe in dreams because when I dream it's about stuff that has actually happened or is going to happen. Some of my dreams have me really thinking like why did I have that precise dream? What was the reason for me having that dream?

Then it makes me wonder am I suppose to do what happened in my dream or do I just sit back and see what happens? But what if I don't like the outcome of my dream?

I guess that's up to me to decide because no matter what happens I'm still gone be me.

-Boo Nasty

**From The Beat:** Dreams are sort of mysterious, and so many of us wonder the same thing. Why'd I have that dream? What did that mean? Sometimes it can help when a dream illuminates something you've been worried about, and all of a sudden you get clear. And yes, ultimately it is up to you to make decisions in your life and make the right choices to get you where you want to go. Those can be hard choices to make (you know that—you're sitting in the hall).

## Get My Ninjas Out the Hood

This time is getting to my head  
A lil' ninja just tryin' to survive  
While the judge tryin' to wash me  
I probably gotta do five  
But it's good though, I gotta maintain  
Keep my head up and stay strong in the game  
My mind is ready but my body is screaming no  
I want to get my chips straight count some big dough  
Get my ninjas out the hood so we can really go.

-Young Purp

**From The Beat:** You see which part of this flow we made the title? That's because we agree... to get what you need, you and your loved ones need to break free of the hood. Not just its geography but also its mentality!

## Taking A Stand

I hope this rap is why they send the troops back from Iraq.  
Bush is the one running 'cause he know Iran got them nuclear plants.  
So I hope after this election  
Obama bring the United States back on top and he won't stop.  
I just hope my black brother don't get popped.  
First black president in the white house resident,  
but we need to give the brother a chance  
cause he gone take the stand.

-Lil' Tone

**From The Beat:** We agree with you—we'd sure like to see some serious change in the White House. We'd like to see Bush out and the troops coming home. If Obama gets elected President, what effect this will have psychologically on black folks in this country? Do you think it will affect crime in this country? Do you think young men and women will think they have more choices?

## Dreams

All dreams mean something  
Dreams are something we need to comprehend  
I think dreams are our pure source of thought  
Even if they're very random  
Even spontaneous  
But they all really mean something deep inside  
All of our dream are here for a reason all balled up  
All contained  
Some good some bad  
Some wiling to come out  
Some sworn to secrecy  
But all of our dreams are here for a reason.

-Dillion

**From The Beat:** Great piece! Do you ever have dreams that you think indicate something or teach you something about yourself and how you feel deep in side?



## Don't Belong Here

Well today I still fell the same I really don't like being here --meaning juvenile hall. The food tastes like I don't know what to call it.

I feel like I shouldn't be here. I really had a lot going on for me on the outside. I had a few high school football teams that wanted me to play and I was just about to get a job.

I mean you don't wanna be told what to do every day. and knowing you can't walk out the door to go see your family or friends or female that feeling doesn't feel good at all.

**-Unknown**

**From The Beat:** We agree! It's terrible to be locked up. But now that you're here, what are you doing to get through today and plan for tomorrow?

## The Gun

Man I was with everybody...my cousin, my squad and a bunch of females. We was laughing, playing, having a good time. I was at my brother's house just chilling.

Everything was going good. It felt so real. Then it got dark everybody disappeared. I was by myself walking down the cold deserted streets.

It was not a car or person I saw in sight.. then all of a sudden, boom!

And I woke up.

**-Young Art**

**From The Beat:** Short and also terrifying. It felt like we were watching a movie - a horror movie! The Beat is looking forward to publishing more of your work!

## I want

I just want to sit high

I just want to live my life

I just want to succeed in life

I just want to have me a family

I just want to have toys

I just want to grow old

I just want to get rich

I just want to make my mother and grandmother proud of me

I just want to stay free & alive

I just want to raise my kids to be someone

I just want to live right one time.

**-Mat**

**From The Beat:** All these things that you want are things you deserve, and things you can have. But yeah, coming out of the system, those things take struggle and a lot of support, plus will. You have the will - do you have the support? From family, friends, or if not - a good program that's dedicated to helping the youth?

## These Streets

Man these streets nowadays ain't cool it's real funky in the streets I live in. Yo' own boy'll bust you if they don't recognize you at first sight ...even if you got a 6 year old baby in your arm.

But that's what happens when the streets ain't bein' nice and you not playin fair with what you got. But in these streets it be like that sometime -- females left all alone to raise babies, get jobs, and hope their kids don't turn out like their fathers, 'cause this shhh at camp be hella burnt out.

**-Lil' Solid**

**From the Beat:** The scene you describe is heartbreaking. The good news is that for every rule there is an exception. Can you look hard in the mirror and say That's me. I'm gonna be the exception. ?

## What My Dream Meant...

I remember a couple of nights ago I had a dream that I was in the visiting room.

My mom came in with my girlfriend. We were talking for a long time and she told she love me. Then I woke up. I think means I miss her a lot.

**-Abdul**

**From The Beat:** There's an old poem, very short: "My love visits me in my dreams". It sounds like that is what happened.

## Not Changing My Life

What's up Beat! This be Lil' Capy from Oakland. Well I'm still waiting for camp to pick me up. They taking hella long to pick me up. I'm hella mad because I was supposed to get out of camp a long time ago.

I've been in camp since August 7, 2007 and its already June 10, 2008, and I'm still not out. I'll probably do a couple months more. I'm just tired of being in and out of jail all the time. I don't even know how it feels to be in my house.

I'm already 18 going on 19 on November 3. So this will be my last time coming to the hall. But I ain't tripping though.

I'll probably end up in Santa Rita because I'm not planning on changing my life no time soon. I've been doing the same thing for so long I don't know anything else but the fast life I'm living and I'm not gonna stop 'cause I don't wanna stop. Ever!

Well that's all I got for today well I'm out.

**-Lil' Capy**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry to hear that you gonna stay in the life forever. We are surprised that there's nothing on the outs that matters enough for you to commit to yourself to change. With all the people you know who have died, and all you've seen, we were thinking you might think it was time for something new. As you already know, you are playing a hell of a risky game. Take care of yourself.

## Struggling for Breath

Slanging and banging, watching fitty's swanging  
EPA ain't no joke where them katas smoke  
Took the first puff at 8 now struggling for breath.

Never understood between right and wrong,

Ended up in the hall at 10.

Look at me now

in and out the hall at camp

doing 6 to 9 months

been in Hillcrest numerous times,

still struggling from the consequences

**-Gustavo**

**From The Beat:** So what needs to happen so you can put a halt to this livin'?

## Feels Good To Go Home

Hey Beat, it's Whisper, just writing to tell you what's cracking in camp. It's hella boring up here. I am going on my 5th month here. Can't wait to get out... I'm trying to get out I'm trying to get school credits so I can graduate High School.

I'm going home every weekend... it feels good to go home. There hasn't been a fight here in a while. Hella gay! Well to all that are locked up keep your heads up stay solid.

**-Whisper**

**From The Beat:** Are you saying you like it better when there are fights? Why? Is it something to let off steam, relieve the boredom? Isn't it better when things go smooth, that way you can keep doing and thinking positive?

## Hope My Dream Comes True

One day I had a dream that I was back in my house and I was chilling outside with my family. Then I woke up. Hope it comes true.

**-No Name**

**From The Beat:** What do you think? Do you think that dream will come true soon? And if it does, what will you be doing to keep that dream a reality?

## Gay Marriage

I don't believe in gay marriage because it goes against life. You're created by a mom and a dad not a mom and a mom and a dad and a dad.

In the Bible it's against the rules and in life now they're making it acceptable which when you say the pledge of allegiance you say under God. It's not right.

**-Kyle**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for putting your thoughts and family's values down for The Beat. If the pledge of allegiance is under God of the Bible, does that mean you think that America should only be a country for people who believe in the Christian God? What about Buddhists, Jews (who only worship according to the Old Testament) atheists - or, to the Native American tribes who worshipped nature, and who lived on this land long before Christian settlers even came here? Are they less American than Christians?

## Punishment

The way I see it is this whole system is ass backwards.

The D.A. wants everyone locked up.

The judge wants you to be "rehabilitated" but sends you to kiddie prison.

And when other people that been here ten/eleven times get a light light sentence for the same stuff you did and this your second time and you going to YA or the pen.

The system is backwards.

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** It sure is a messed up system. What would make it fair? How should the system work? How would you handle thugs doing what they doin'?

## In My Dreams

In my dreams it seem like I'll be havin' real fun. It then seems like every thing is gonna go bad it then I'll wake up in be sweatin'. In then sometime it be like I can't go to sleep. 'Cause I think I'm going to have a bad dream.

But when I do sleep it be all good then it be something I don't want to wake up.

**-James**

**From The Beat:** Have you ever tried keeping a pencil buy your bed so that when you wake up you can write your dreams down immediately? A lot of famous writers, artists, musicians, take inspirations from their dreams.

## I Miss My Family

I miss my mom, my dad, my brothers, and basically my family. Now when I'm gone I really what family is all about. I realized I love them a lot when I get out of this place I will realized what I got and live my life to the fullest and be good and calm down in life and get my life straight.

I miss outside when I could do anything I feel like doing. When I'm outside I get to make phone calls, computer, talk to my parents, and talk to people around my block.

**-W**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get out soon, and when you do, don't come back!

## Laying in an Alleyway

I had a dream once I didn't know where I was. It was me and my girlfriend... it was like six clock , and it was getting dark. We couldn't find a way back, but the funny thing was that I didn't know where I was coming from.

As we were walking, two cars come out of the dark and stopped in front of us. They jumped out and just looked at us and pulled out a couple of guns and started to shoot at us for hella long till they ran out of bullets.

I got hit a couple of times and I was okay, but my girlfriend wasn't. She just lay there and I didn't know what to do. All I did was cry for a bit, but out of nowhere I had a 15. in my hand and I just started taking shots at them, until I passed out.

And when I wake up I was laying in an alleyway by myself in a place I never seen before, and all I know was that my girlfriend bad past away then I woke up.

**-Leonardo**

**From the Beat:** What a frightening dream! Do you think it could have been a warning of some sort? A warning about the way you live? Or maybe just a way of dealing with the stress and fear of daily life?

## Avoiding Prison Future: Stay Focused

I think if you want to avoid prison future, you got to stay doing positive things and not be doing stuff that's illegal, or stuff that can get you in prison. You got to stay in school and stay focused or go to college, get a job, and get your money.

**-Andrew**

**From The Beat:** Is this what you plan to do? Do you have positive friends who can support you in this goal?

## I Want To Be Somebody

Everybody wants to be somebody. I want to be somebody. Not just another statistic. Not just another fuck-up. I want to be able to say that once I was young and made mistakes, but I made up my mind to be someone.

And here in this situation is nothing to be proud of. But I'm determined to prove the people that said you'll never make it wrong, and be the first one in my family to go to college. Be proud of myself. Leave the 'hood and come back with more than I could ever imagine.

**-Ryan**

**From the Beat:** This is inspiring determination! What are your immediate plans for when you touch down? What could get in your way?

## We Need To Be With Our Families

I think punishment makes you worse.

I think it causes you to think of ways to be sneakier so you won't get caught. It makes you mad that you get caught so you take your anger out on other people. I think they should help us rather than punish us and maybe we wouldn't be the way we are now. I also think that punishments we get are too harsh.

I think we need to be with our families, not going to camp or a group home. They need to keep us out not locked in a cell too many hours a day it just makes us want to run and not do what we are supposed to.

I think the system needs to switch its game up, not us.

**-Usher**

**From The Beat:** OK, you say the system should "help." Very good point, but how? A lot of people who commit crimes do it when they are living with their families, so clearly being with family isn't always enough. What kind of help should the system provide, and do you think it will be accepted and used?

## Long Term Punishment: Not Good for Anyone

To me I believe that punishment in certain circumstances is for the good and the bad. But most of the time I think that punishment is bad, because all it does is makes the person more angry, and more liable to do the same thing.

Life as far as incarcerating people for long numbers of time... I believe that to the human it doesn't do anything but put them in a prison mind state. And that isn't good for anyone.

**-Steve**

**From The Beat:** What would you suggest as an alternative to long term confinement? What would be a good way to help rehabilitate?

## To Be A Good Father

The thing that hurt me the most is that I have a baby mama at the house and knowing that she need to be there for her. But what really get to me is that my son is going to be born in a couple of months and I ain't gone be in the hospital room to see my first son born. That hurt me every night I go to sleep.

But when I talk to her she sound like she's doing okay. When I'm free I want to take care of my son and provide for him and just be a good father to my son like my father was for me. And get off paper work and stay outta trouble.

**-Nasty Boy Rick**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you will miss the birth, but what's important is that day to day time that you spend with him when you get out, and the way you switch up your life so you can be a good dad. In your mind, how does a good dad raise his child?

## Punishment

What's up Beat. Before I came in here to the hall this time I really didn't believe in punishment. I never really thought I would get punished like this, because I was always hitting licks, never getting caught and always getting in high speed chases.

I always was getting away, I was the only one out of my patnas that never got caught. Then hella people was saying I'ma get caught soon and other people was telling me to stop hitting licks but I didn't listen, because I thought I was 'bout to keep getting away but I kept getting chances to stop and I never did...So my chances ran out. I knew I was about to get caught sooner or later but I didn't think my punishment was about to be this... but now I ain't tripping and I'm going camp.

**-Rio**

**From The Beat:** Do you feel like getting punishment has changed you, given you a wake up call? Or do you think that once you get out you'll fall into the same old routine?

## A Better Life

What I dream for is a better life

Learn how to get through it without a fight

There's ditches every step I take

I need to learn to get over them without any mistake

Life isn't so great so far

One day it will be and I'll be above them all

This is only a dream not real life

Hopefully one day I could make it life.

**-Say O**

**From The Beat:** What are some of the things you could do to take your future in your own hands. Not just hoping for better things, but also STRIVING for better things?

## I Miss You Raider

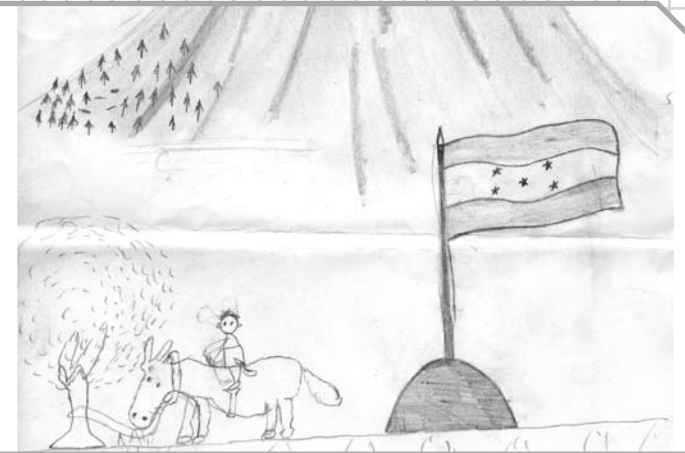
I miss my cat. I love how soft he is. When I'm mad I just hold him and he calms me down. I can talk to him about everything because he cant talk back. When I'm at home I sleep with him every night.

He is the nicest cat I have ever met because he has never tried to attack me. I miss him so much. I know people would make fun of me if they read this but I don't care because I love my cat. It was the first cat I've ever owned. All my homies like it too, because it isn't mean to anyone or anything.

Man, I miss you Raider. (My cat's name)

**-Patrick**

**From The Beat:** Man, no one will make fun of you for missing your pet - and if they do, they're not looking inside, because we all miss our pets when we're kept from them. They give us so much love!



## Punishment

People think of punishment as something that would help stop the criminal mind. To be punished you would have to do something awful or harmful to another person.

Forms of punishment could be going to prison or going to a county jail for a couple days, sometimes the crime isn't harsh enough to get in trouble with police, but your parents could probably give you another form of punishment.

Punishment is not always helpful and most times it doesn't help rehabilitate.

**-Bullet**

**From The Beat:** What do you think would help rehabilitate? What are the most important programs that should be available?

## Soon to Be a Father of Twins

"As of ya'll who don't know me, you probably never won't....But I am from San Francisco, Ca; I recently turned 18 in here...I am legal....My girl is pregnant with twin girls...I'm excited, but nervous..."

Basically, for those of ya'll who think life's a joke, you ain't gone live long straight up....take life serious and run with it while you got it good...ninjas in San Quentin and Pelican Bay doing life, ain't got a chance to learn from they mistakes. So for all my real ninjas keep it solid and touch down safe. Luv.

**-San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Double the trouble, double the love! We hope you've got strong arms, because those little girls are always going to be wanting Daddy to pick them up! Are you going to have to make a lot of changes? Like what?



## Dreams

The halls make you have crazy dreams. The dreams be different when you're at home. In juvenile hall, I dream about my friends and my girl. I just wake up laughing and I wouldn't be able to go back to sleep.

Some dreams I have I wake up and see I am still in juvenile, and I would just get hella mad and start flashin' on staff when they let me out my room.

The point I'm tryin' to make is juvenile hall can have an effect on you mentally and physically.

-Alonzo

**From The Beat:** We wish you had shared some of the details of those dreams where you woke up and found yourself laughing. We can always use a good laugh. When you flash on staff, what are the consequences you have to face?

## And So I Pray

I guess I'm a money-hungry chick, 'cause when I get out I'm going back to the block. But it ain't really about that. I mean, I love my family and don't wanna hurt them no more. That's why I'm a try be on my own and do my own thing 'cause being worried about me ain't the thang to do. So I pray and thank god.

-Rie Ria

**From The Beat:** You're a "money-hungry chick" who's is making no money except for the system's greedy pockets — and worse, who's promising to go back to the very behavior that you know has hurt your loved ones in the past. It's time to grow up, Rie Ria, which means it's time to sacrifice some of what you like doing for a family that has already sacrificed so much for you!

## Hey, Girl!

This ya boy in the max givin' a shout out to my D-Girl, ya dig. I wanna let her know to keep slidin' through the 'jects 'cause one of these days 'm gone be free. But first I gotta knock my time out in Wyoming or Montana. Then I'm a bounce back and be posted like always. Dig?

Shout out to Sexy Lexy. I ain't forgot.

-D-Boy

**From The Beat:** If, after you return from your program, you go back to doing what led you here to begin with, then you're writing your own ticket back to spend time with boys. You'll be writing love poems to D-Girl, but you'll be showering with boys. We hope you don't have to learn this truth the hard way!

## I Ain't Gonna Stop

What's good with The Beat? This week I'm gone write about "punishment." I came in here for a warrant and armed robbery, aka 211. I look at this as punishment, but it ain't gone stop me 'cause cash rules everything around me. Even though I'm D-Boy, I'm also a stick-up ninja, so watch yo' back.

-D-Boy

**From The Beat:** We wish you had written more on the topic of punishment. If this is punishment, as you write that it is, but it won't change your behavior, then why do we do it? The cash that you say "rules everything" also rules the system. That's why they're happy to read that you don't plan to change your act. That way, they don't have to change theirs, either!

*I'm glad I really wasn't there. It's ugly in the 'hood right now.*

## Things Are Gonna Change

Ninja just got a fresh cut in this max unit. You know we go hard. But anyways, I'm doing time right now.

I just found out that the gang task force just raided the 'jects. But I'm kind of glad that I wasn't out there because I would've probably got caught with a gun or with drugs. I could've had a new case, still at 850 or maybe back at San Bruno.

But I'm glad I really wasn't there. It's ugly in the 'hood right now. But when I get out, things are gonna change. I get out by late September, early October. Peace.

-Wiggims

**From The Beat:** The one thing we know will NOT change is what goes down in the 'hood. So, when you say "things are gonna change," we hope you mean that you are going to change to avoid the ugliness that leads to jail or worse. If you're packing or holding drugs on the outs, you're giving the system all the power it needs to "put you away." So, what do you plan to change about your own behavior when you walk out of here?

"Saying I'm  
Sorry"

## Put 'Em In San Quentin

The best punishment is to send a youth to San Quentin because it's more punishment. I think that San Quentin is more punishment because youth will have to be around people that are more older. And also that you will be challenged to do things that you never did before that's gone scare you and make you not want to go to jail. That's why I think San Quentin is a good punishment for youth — except me.

-Coop

**From The Beat:** Damn! That's harsh! But we have to ask: If San Quentin is the punishment you think would be effective, why do you want to exclude yourself? Also, why do so many San Quentin prisoners get out of prison only to go back in? Does punishment work?

## Dreaming About Money

Man, this ya boy comin' from that max unit, ridin' this shhh out. You know what's funny. People think ya boy do this and do that, but shhh ain't ever true. Everybody know what I'm about. I get money, and the only people who stoppin' me is these punk-ass police. They ain't gone keep me fo' long 'cause you ain't know I gotta go where ya goin'. I gotta get back to the money.

-Boo Bear

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you're determined to make money for those that are holding you! It was the money chase that got you here, and it's the money chase that will put you back in here unless you come up with a new game plan. If you don't have a real plan to keep your freedom, you can count on losing it... again. We hope you don't.

## I Wish I Was Free For The Summer

What's up with The Beat? It's ya boy, Lil' Rob, at the Ranch, chillin' here and shhh. I wish I was free for the summer! It's hella hot up at this boring Ranch and we got a swimming pool, but they won't open that shhh up!

And if I was free for the summer, I would be having big water fights in the 'hood or posted on the block! Or go downtown, gettin' at some females, feel me? Summer is poppin' on the outs! And I wish I was out there! Well, Beat, until I touch down.

**-Lil' Rob**

**From The Beat:** Since you wrote this, the counselors at the Ranch have been taking all of you swimming in your pool. Last week you went. Do you swim when you're home on the outs—maybe at the Y, at Ocean Beach, the Russian River?

## Verbal Abuse Doesn't Work As Punishment

What doesn't work as punishment is verbal abuse.

It's better to get your ass beat by ninjas, your elders, my parents, grandparents, everybody. Punishment don't work because it goes in one ear and out the other. I don't listen and I get my ass beat with bamboo sticks. You will never fight back because they're your parents and you owe them everything.

**-Been Beat**

**From The Beat:** Well you are definitely speaking from experience... There are many people who believe that no one should ever hit anyone, no matter what, because you can't teach peace with violence. What do you think? Do you plan to beat your own children with bamboo sticks?

## Avoiding A Prison Future

What's good wit it? I'm still in this hole. These is some weak-ass topics, but I picked this one because I can't mess with prison, I'm a beast on the streets, but I ain't 'bout to spend the rest of my life in a prison.

It's hella reasons why a ninja shouldn't want to spend his life in prison, but you gotta be gay not to trip off it, because you ain't gonna touch a female for the rest of yo' life. Don't think you 'bout to get married in that grimy place because why would your female go all the way to a prison to give you a conjugal visit, when she can go to the next door neighbor? I witnessed it. I was that neighbor, but I'm gone holla at ya next week.

**-T-Macaroni**

**From The Beat:** All we can say, T-M, is that nobody in prison thought that's where he'd be. They all thought they were smarter than the cops, slicker than the system. They all said they weren't about to spend more time in prison. And that's where they all are spending more time. Think about it. We hope that the karma you created by sleeping with that prisoner's female doesn't find you in the same situation — only in reverse...

## Going To Jail Is Part Of Life

What's good with The Beat? Mayne, you know me at the Ranch. Today's topic is avoiding prison lock up. There really isn't no way to avoid prison.

The only way a ninja could stay out of prison is if he switches up on the homies. Ninjas realize the fact that they're scared of the game, they can't be a real gangsta. People can't predict the future, talking about they ain't going to jail. It part of life. If you make the wrong decision, you bound to get locked up. But you know me—I stay solid to the bone and true to the fullest, 'cause you only live one time.

**-Moreno**

**From The Beat:** Have you ever really imagined what it's like to spend years, maybe decades or more of your life in prison? Have you ever explored New York, Nigeria? Paris? Like you say, you only live one time. Shouldn't you try to experience more of the world in that one life?

## What Do Your Dreams Mean?

What good with The Beat?

I had a dream that I was chillin' in the 'hood with my friends and we having a good time. I had a car, and me and my friends got out the car talking. Then some girls came to where we was at. We was chillin' altogether, and somebody was running down the hill telling me, "Let me talk to you," trying to distract me.

Then I'm like, "Move dude, move." Then a car came down the hill and some boys jumped out shooting at me and my friends. Then I start running. Then I heard people saying, "Get down! Get down!" Then I got down.

Then I was the gunman coming towards me, so I got up and I started running again, trying to run to the balcony. Then he was behind me. He had a gun in his hand.

In my mind I'm like, "Damn! I'm finna get killed." Then he looked at me and I looked at him. Then I jumped up like, damn, I was finna get killed. I seen the dude's face, but I couldn't recognize it. Then I thought the dude was tryna tell me something. Was he tryna get me out of there, or he was tryna get me killed?

**-Lil' Cali**

**From The Beat:** Dreams are interesting things because all the characters and actions in them come straight from your own mind. So, rather than asking if "he" was trying to get you out of there or trying to get you killed, you should be asking, "Was I trying to get me out of there or get me killed?" What were you trying to say to yourself?

## Avoiding A Prison Future

To avoid myself from going to prison in the long run, I am going to need to slow my role and calm down. I also need to stop runnin' with fake-ass beezies. I also need to finish going to school and go to college.

**-Ex**

**From The Beat:** Yes, you need to do all these things. But why wait to make the changes? When you say you're "going to" need to slow your role, that means something you're putting off until later. When do you plan to put any of these "plans" into play?

## Making Something Of Myself

What it do, Beat? It's mackin'-ass Cash. Been sittin' it down for a month now. Big chillin' in the building. But in my dreams, mayne, making something of myself. Gettin' money to where, by the time I'm dub-one (21), I'll have a fat spot somewhere and a good job checkin' this, though.

**-Cash Money**

**From The Beat:** But how? Just wishing for it doesn't change anything. If you keep trying to get your money the way you've been getting it, you'll just be making more money for the system, where you'll be spending more of your time. So, what's your plan?

## My Dream

Once I had a dream that I was walking with my brother in our building when the police got off the elevator and started chasing us. I ran down the steps and my brother ran up the steps. The police ran after me,

I ran to the 2nd floor and got on the elevator to the roof. When I got off the elevator, I hid behind a little stable or something. Then I woke up.

About a month later, the police arrested my brother in our building. I know now that the dream was a warning, but I never told my brother.

**-Perry**

**From The Beat:** What do you think this dream was warning you about? Was it just the building, or was there more to this warning that you didn't pay attention to. After all, it's not just your brother that got arrested, but you, too, even if it wasn't in your building. Are you paying attention to what you're trying to tell yourself?

## Mi Firme Jaina

Que pasa mija, what you been up to, Baby Doll?  
 This your gangsta sombra missing holding you in my  
 arms Your besos are so sweet, soft, and tender  
 My sun in the summer, fire in the winter  
 Your eyes say it all, so sexy in a way  
 My brown Chicana that been down for me since the very  
 first day  
 Your body sends electric ways through my body  
 We can party — you prefer Hennessey over Bacardi  
 Tu mama approves but tu padre doesn't  
 Brother is my partner in crime, so to me that means  
 something  
 Telling me there's more in life than repping my barrio  
 And telling me that for my enemies I should feel sorry  
 for  
 But when it's pedo (funk), you're one of the first to ride  
 That's mi amor, I made you my wife  
 'Cause with you by my side I feel so perfect  
 Te amo baby girl, but you already know.

**-G Shadow**

*From The Beat: What good is a love so fine/ She won't get better with  
 age like wine/ So she's out there but you're still here/ With boys all  
 around, and shedding a tear/ You've left her behind and chosen the  
 barrio/ When you look back, you're going to feel oh, so sorry, oh!*

## Kids Need Punishment

Punishment is the way to do. Most kids need punishment  
 so they can stop doing crimes in these San Francisco  
 streets. Most parents do not punish their kids here in  
 San Francisco 'cause kids get over on their parents. And  
 that's why parents suffer.

**-P-Nutty**

*From The Beat: But most of the kids in the hall have been hit by their  
 parents, as well as being here multiple times. If punishment stops kids  
 from doing crimes, then why hasn't the punishment they've received  
 stopped them? Why hasn't it stopped you?*

## The Streets And Jail Aren't For Me!

Jail ain't the place for me and the streets ain't either!  
 But I did my thing and now facin' my consequences. But  
 this ain't the best place. I gotta get out on the outs and be  
 myself and do what I'm supposed to do to stay outta the  
 halls! But now I'm in the halls, I'ma do my time, get this  
 out the way! Ha ha.

**-Smokey**

*From The Beat: Is this your first time here? If so, we hope it's enough to  
 make you keep the promises you make here so that it is also your last  
 time here. But if you've been here before, will this time be different?  
 How?*

## Gangbanging Is Not A Game

What it do, Beat? This is yo' boy, G- Enano. Let me talk  
 about the suckas talking about changing they life. Them  
 ninjas ain't shhh, they were suckas from the start. They  
 should have never got in the game if they weren't 'bout  
 it.

Gangbanging is a commitment, not a game. I been  
 committed since the start. A lot of ninjas couldn't hang,  
 they really thought they was ready to bang. Just let me  
 say one more thing—there's a lot of fakers out there. This  
 is G-Enano an' I'm out.

**-G-Enano**

*From The Beat: Some young people get tired of going to juvy and jail,  
 watching their backs, and the incessant danger of the streets, and are  
 searching for another life. They may not be sure yet which direction to  
 go in, but they have the courage to try to make it out there, to look for  
 a good life — is that so wrong?*

## This Dumb-Ass Boy

What it do, Beat Within? Sitting in my cell, thinking to  
 myself, "This dumb ass boy..." Well, I did think he was a  
 man, but he still play with toys. Telling the world that I'm  
 his pet. Ha ha. I don't walk on four legs. Sorry, lil'-ass boy  
 got me mixed up with somebody else.

Everyone and they momma say, "You this'" and "You  
 that." Damn, keep my name out yo' mouth. If you ain't got  
 shhh to say that nice, don't say it at all.

This dumb-ass boy telling the world that I'm his  
 runner. Ha ha. He got me dummy-ass messed up. Am so  
 mad, I feel like hitting him with a bat. Oh, yeah, and I  
 forgot... he a lil'-ass boy that don't got shhh to do but lie  
 to make him feel better and make me look stupid.

This dumb-ass boy! That's what I get for messing  
 around with this lil'-ass boy like him. Look at me doing  
 the R Kelly ha ha. He going crazy. I pray to God that  
 he don't get six feet under. What was I thinking, giving  
 him my world? We never even made love. Put two and  
 two together and you get four. Remember, he called me  
 the worst names you can call a female. Damn, sitting in  
 my cell, thinking I got to be dreaming, 'cause I don't see  
 myself as them names. I see myself on the WMBA. I'm six  
 foot one.

Well, that's all, Beat. I'm out. To all ma goons and all  
 the units, even the hatters.

**-Banana**

*From The Beat: What is it about this boy that makes you care for him,  
 even as a friend? And what is it about you that makes him want to call  
 his "pet" names for you? What are you doing to prepare yourself for the  
 WMBA? You can't do it without graduating from high school and then  
 showing your skills in college. Is that in your plans?*

## Punishment

I say punishment is this jail stuff, because I been up in  
 here for a minute, and I been in and out of group homes  
 since I was barely a teen. Now I'm bout to be 18 in four  
 months and my PO don't wanna let me go home. He wants  
 me to go to the Ranch for 18 months and I'm already  
 knowing if I go, I'ma catch dead time. So I probably won't  
 come home 'til I'm like 20.

So I say I been through enough punishment because  
 I only got two charges and I ain't caught a new case since  
 2004. but I can't go home and I think that's messed up.  
 But I'ma be cool. I'ma be out one day. They can't hold me  
 foreva.

**-Lee LB**

*From The Beat: Well, if you've been coming in and out of group homes  
 for the past four years, then it seems like punishment doesn't work very  
 well. We agree that you've been punished a lot, but the question is how  
 effective your punishment has been. If you get caught up again, then it  
 wasn't effective... We hope you don't.*

## A Dream Becomes Reality

I had a dream about being chased by my enemy, and a  
 week later it came true. I was just thinking about it. I  
 couldn't remember when I seen it or where I seen it. I was  
 just thinking for a while, and then I remembered that I  
 seen it in my dream. It was crazy. I couldn't believe it.

It happened quick. I was just walking to my friend's  
 house, and then I just seen this guy looking at me. I kept  
 walking and when I looked back, I seen him running,  
 coming towards me, and I started running. He chased me  
 about four blocks. Then I just caught the J car.

**-Alejandro**

*From The Beat: Well, if you dream about things that come true, why not  
 try dreaming about getting out of here and doing what you need to do  
 to stay out of here. That's the dream we hope comes true.*



## Not That Crazy

Hey, Beat, what you been up to? Well, today I want to talk about being shot. Well, me, I got shot two times—one in the knee and the hand. Being shot ain't coo' at all. I wish I did not get shot. I was paralyzed, but now I'm walking, so I thank God. I still love my haters that did that to me.

Hey, they call me Banana. Yeah, that's me. I can't wait 'til I get out of here. I'm going crazy an' they trying to put me on some crazy pills. Hell no, that won't go. I'm not that crazy to be to be on pills.

**-Banana**

**From The Beat:** So, you've been shot twice, and yet you're still locked up! What will it take for you to see that the choices you've been making lead to consequences that you don't want to experience? We admire you for refusing pills (what do they say when you say no?), but we wonder why you can't bring that same sense of confidence and control over your life to stop doing the things that bring you here.

## Dreams

Man, I keep playing my crash over and over. It's like it won't get out of my head. I was riding my motor scooter, and I got hit by a truck (real story. In the dream I got killed.

I don't know if it was telling me that I could have gotten killed that night. It is hard for me to tell what it means 'cause I have this dream often. Could I have died that night?

**-Bigg E**

**From The Beat:** Of course, the real answer to your question is that any of us could die at any time. Nothing is guaranteed. But it does sound like you're concerned, at least subconsciously, about that motor scooter and how dangerous it can be. Just be careful!

## Should I Or Shouldn't I?

I'm scared! Should I approach you? What you thinking? Are you into me like I'm into you? I like you. Should I tell you? What's going to happen? Is she gone dis me?

I can't stop staring. She make me feel happy. Can't stop smiling. What I'm gone do? I'm into you. Her personality is what has captured me. She strong. Nobody can get to you, I think. What should I do?

I look at you. I want to just hold you, never let go. I can't because I'm scared of what you might think of me, boo.

Man, can I be yo' fairytale?

**-Jarome**

**From The Beat:** This is an age-old problem, having feelings for someone without knowing if they have feelings for you. Of course, if you want to hold someone and never let them go, the first thing you're going to have to do is get out of here and stay out of here. In fact, that's something you should do whether you're in love or not.

## Life Is Hard

What's up, Beat an' Beat readers? My topic today is that life is hard. The reason why I say that is because when you are at your worst moments, like now, the dude that I once thought was my man had let me down.

When I got my phone call on Friday, he told me he love me an' he was going to be by my side, an' all that good stuff, but he let me down, an' now I'm sad an' my heart is broke. Now I'm on my own. But to all y'all, I'ma tell ya like this: the people that you thought was your friends are truly not, so trust no one.

**-Bri**

**From The Beat:** We don't think your conclusion to "trust no one" is very helpful to living your life. You will find yourself trusting people throughout your life, because no one can live without the help of others, from time to time. So, the trick is to find trustworthy friends to hang with. And you do that by being trustworthy yourself.

## Late Night Lurker

On the move as a young ninja trying to get it however a ninja can for the struggle and the hustle. Some ninjas do it for fun. Some ninjas do it for real. Most fake don't make it lurking in the street the way you see the streets.

Seeing people struggle while these crackers ain't even trying to say nothing to a ninja. Steady trying to take ninja away. From my mouth if I'm struggling ain't in my eyes. I'm always is going be a late night lurker.

**-Rantweez**

**From The Beat:** To be honest, we just can't quite understand what you're trying to say in this piece. All we can see is that "lurking" has led you here where all you can do is lurk between your room and the shower, between your room and the classroom, between your room and the unit. Not a lot of room for lurking, so maybe it's time to change something in this description.

## This Is More Than Punishment

What I'm doin' is not punishment. This is more than punishment. Can't see my family every day. When you on punishment you see yo' mom every day to put food on your plate, and to tell you when you for surely getting off punishment — not when you maybe get out wearing somebody else' shirt, shorts and drawe's, using somebody else spoons that been used already.

**-Bernard**

**From The Beat:** We agree with you that this is an extreme form of punishment, designed to make you stop whatever it was that brought you here. But our question is whether such treatment works. Even when you were punished by your mother, did it keep you from repeating the mistakes that led to the punishment?

## Being Locked Up Affects My Dreams

I had a dream three days before I got locked up about being in here bumping into one of my friends on the outs. This dream turned into reality the day I got locked up. This dream was a deja-vu dream. I had another dream bout being chased by one of my enemies with a gun. This kept me paranoid.

I realized that being in the halls has a big effect on my dreams. Some dreams can become reality. There's a big difference when I get my rights taken away, and it affects me in many different ways, mostly mentally.

**-Chris**

**From The Beat:** If being in the halls is what affects your dreams, then how do you explain the dream you had three days before you got locked up? It seems like it's what you're doing out there that affects your dreams much more than what happens in here. How do you deal with the paranoia that some of your dreams cause you?

## The DA Trying To Give Me Eight Years

What's good with the Beat, man? The DA trying to give me eight years. Keep on going back and forth to court. Mama want me to live a long time. She don't want me to go to 850, but I chose the wrong things and made some mistakes that wish I never did. Smoked some weed. Now sis got a new kid.

Went to court. I can't get a chance. Trying to change my life and be a new woman. People say I can't. Sis think I can. Screw it, B, that's what I am. Imagine being in a bathroom, sleeping every night. I bet the DA don't know, but if she did, she still try to give a ninja eight years.

**-Banana**

**From The Beat:** We don't know what "mistakes" you're talking about, but if the DA is trying to give you 8 years, then it was for much more than smoking some weed! If you want to change the direction you've been moving in, then you have to think more about your own responsibility for being here, your own choices that put you here. After all, unless you did whatever it was that gave her power over your life, the DA couldn't put you anywhere!

## Savage Life, Part Two

What poppin' with The Beat, dawg?, Yung Jigg, that  
bruh

Got to keep it so street, huh  
I been doing it for a while, but it ain't sleep time  
Got to send this ninja platinum two or three time  
We flyin' cloud nine  
Whoeva figure we pop it  
Be me in a old drop  
And the wheel don't stop  
Yeah, a ninja came up fifty thousand on a watch  
They got ninja stuck and a ninja forgot  
Lots of ninjas get shot  
So keep yo' pistol  
And if you got love for him  
Watch yo' ninja, you could let him slip —  
I'm tellin' you gone miss him  
Love old girl been a minute since I kissed her  
But she keep it real so in her heart she ain't trippin'  
Slowed up on drankin', I don't get too tipsy  
'Cause bein' off guard on a mission is too risky  
Ask me what I want in life  
Be specific — money, power, my ninja  
Yeah, that be terrific, but really all a dream  
That why I'm just livin'  
Yo' mind too little to feel what I'm spittin'  
Dem haters'll kill to be sittin' where I'm sittin'  
I just so real that how I'm gettin' it how I'm gettin' it  
Say what you want, but money talk... stop whisperin'

-Soda

From The Beat: Thanks for reading this rap to us in the workshop and making it more understandable. We did take one line out, but you know why...

## Them Ninjas

What's happenin'? Shhh, I ain't really feelin' these topics, Leroy, so I'ma talk about them punks in the other units. They be thinkin' they sick 'cause they behind them glass windows tryna mug. But they ain't real like this thug. I'm real — hold steel, count bills, make deals. Naw...

But them ninjas, like they on ya boy, ya heard. But I bet a "hunnit" they ain't got more hands like me. I don't mess with them ninjas. I mess with mines, never cross game, dog. I ride with that thank, but check it out, Whody, I'm runnin' out of words to think, an' I don't like to think, so I'm audi.

-Lil' Canon

From The Beat: You say you don't like to think, but it's more accurate to say you only like to think every once in a while. This piece is not an example of your thinking. (Focus on yourself; forget the next boy...) But we've read some fine pieces by you that tell us you are quite capable of deep thinking... when you want to.

## I'll Do Anything

Yeah, this your boy V-M. Man, what's up with The Beat? Man, it's like I'm on punishment because I'm locked and I can't get up outta here unless they think that I can go out in the street. I think I could go back out because I'm going o go to school and get a good job.

The only reason I got in the system because I was hangin' with the stupid boy that got me locked up. Now I'm in the system and I can't get up out of this shhh. I will do anything to get out.

-V-M

From The Beat: The truth is that you don't have to "do anything" to get out of here. You will get out even if you do nothing. But then what? That's where the rubber meets the road, on the outside where you regain control of your own decisions. That's when keeping your promise to go to school will make the difference.

## A Messed Up Game

I don't like being in this jail cell, but this is where I was put at. I just was doing my thing on the outs. I never wanted to be in JJC. It's a ninja that been here for four months, and I look at the shhh they go through and say that I don't want to be like that. How the hell you let somebody sit for four months and send them to a group home. The crackers play a messed up game.

-TiShan

From The Beat: You may be right about the messed up game, but it's you who gave the crackers all the power they needed to play with you. No one wants to be here, but it takes more than "wanting" to stay free. If doing "your thing" lands you behind walls with strangers telling you what to do and when to do it, maybe it's time to come up with a new thing.

## Letting Staff Know What I Think

What's going on Beat? It's me again. Well, I'm just chillin' and stuff, waitin' to go home. Time is going by hella slow. I got two more months until I get to go home. That's all I can really talk about 'cause six months is hella long, and this is the very first time I've been locked up for this long.

Shhh, it's hell 'cause staff be playin' that favoritism bull crap, play us off our rec and all the stuff. I ain't trippin' 'cause I'm almost out my way towards that door. And when I do get out, I'ma let the staff know how I felt about them. I mean, I already did hella times, but it won't hurt them or me just to let them know again.

I just got to do better — or at least not get caught. I miss my family, my ninjas, money, drank, Newports and sex. Yup. So I'll write to you ninjas next week. Late.

-E.B.

From The Beat: Be very careful, EB. First, short time is always hard time because you can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and you're tempted to cut corners. But second, we worry about that little throw-away line, "... at least not get caught." We know you already know this, but our bloated prisons are filled with people who thought they could be slicker and not get caught. We want you to stay free!

## Sneak Peak

What's good, Beat  
I give you a sneak peak  
I ain't got to cheat  
I increase the peace with your girl  
The more the merrier  
The better the butter  
More dinero

This is a sneak peal to all you haters

-Watery Eyes

From The Beat: We can't say that we really understand this poem, but we're not sure we want you to spell it out for us, either...

## Punishment

When I do think about it and still do the things I do and get punished, I don't think that it don't help me to stop, but it helps me to do it better or to do it differently. I think I need something more severe, like time and a group home.

To tell you the truth, Beat, I don't even drink or smoke. But the beatings my sister give me I'll definitely stop. For some people punishment don't accomplish anything. Being punished only tells people to do better or differently.

-Gregory

From The Beat: It sounds like you're saying that in some respects, punishment only makes "criminals" smarter. If that's true, why do you think more severe punishment would make you change what you haven't changed yet? What did your sister give you beatings for?

## Dreaming Of A Route To The Out

In my dreams  
I've seen many themes  
And for now it seems  
That it is the only way out  
A route to the out  
Where I can forget  
The sentencing I'm facing here  
I can be with the familia  
So mira  
A dream is a getaway  
To infinite possibilities

**-H-Man**

**From The Beat:** We would love to read one or more of these dreams that allow you to get over the walls and back into the warm embrace of your family, and any of the other "infinite possibilities" that have captured your imagination.

## What I Miss Most

What's crackin', Beat? This Richard from max. This week I get interviewed for APA. I hope to get accepted so I can get out on house arrest. On Wednesday I got court, so I can see if I got accepted. Hopefully, so I can be with my girl and spend time with my family.

The thing I miss most about the outs is my family and girl. I hate having to write letters to my loved ones rather than being right next to them. Hopefully, I get out so I can be with my family.

**-Richard**

**From The Beat:** We hope your interview with APA went well, and that you will get your wish to be back with your girl and family. But what are your plans to keep your freedom when it comes? If you don't make a plan, you're allowing someone else to make it for you...

## My Family!

I hate it when I'm here. I can't be out there to watch my family, I can't kick it with my friends, I can't be out there to watch my little brother from danger, Can't walk him from school. I want to be there when he does something different. I want to be there when he need me, I don't want him to be like me. I want to be out there for his 6th birthday and I want him to go to school. That's all I want to say about my family.

**-Phainy**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get back to being with your family soon. But also you must know that when you are back among them it is your job to make sure that around them is where you're going to stay. It's easy to say what you want to do but can you do it? Can you guaranteed your brother that as long as you're alive you'll be there for every remaining birthday? The choice is yours.

## What's Driving Me Crazy

Well, Beat, what's driving me crazy is that my baby girl is up in here. She's going to be going to Colorado for awhile, but I just want to her to know when she gets back I'll be here waiting for her - always and forever. I just want her to know that I love her and really care for her. I'm going to be there for her through thick and thin, no matter what - me and her been outnumbered by haters from the start.

Haters get mad cause they can't break us apart. It's me and her till the end of time.

Well Beat, I'm going to cut this short. I just want my baby to know that I love her and that I'm always thinking of her. Alright Beat, much love and respect.

**- Bugzy**

**The Beat Within:** Well, these sound like really heartfelt words, but how does one trust when their heart has been a little broken. Anyway, it sounds like you really meant it so we wish you luck.

## Punishment

I think this time in here is enough punishment for me, cause I can't be out there for my lady that's pregnant with my baby girl. I can't be there for her 'cause I'm in here and they don't let me out and they know I have to be there for her, that's their way of punishing me and I think that it's bullshhhh that they're doing this to me but screw it, its my fault, I have these ways. All right Beat,' till pencil meets paper, late!

**-Gary and Ruby**

**From The Beat:** Even though you can't be with here everyday, you did get to go out and see the birth of your baby. So, use your time in here wisely and take it day by day until you get back to your family.

## Avoiding A Prison Future

I could've avoided this situation by not doing whatever. But I had no idea I was gonna end up doing time for that. Now I'm stuck in juvie doing dead-time, waiting for my court date.

The DA's trying to try me as an adult. If I lose my case, I can still win, but it's a tight situation. But if I lose and get tried as a minor, I'll go to CYA. if I get tried as an adult, however, I'll go to county or a while. Then I'll get shipped to prison. I ain't trying to do that though! I'm not scared to go to prison, but I'm scared to go to prison with my charges.

I wouldn't want any gang-member to go through what I'm going through. Not anybody, but a gangsta can't be goin' on PC like a coward! And my case I have automatic PC if I loose! But I'm hoping for the best so I can be out with my FREEDOM, my loved ones, and everything else out there.

I'm out for right now, late!

**-Smirk**

**From The Beat:** We don't know what bought you here, so we don't know why you're an automatic PC if you go to prison. But we know that PC is not a good designation to have in prison, especially for a gang member, so we hope you don't have to face that. We're curious, though... You said you had no idea it would send you here, so what did you think would (or should) happen?

## My Dreams

My dreams are pretty funny, chillin' with my homies and family.

Wake up and these walls are staring down at me foolishly. They're laughin' at me, knowing I would do anything just to be free.

But sadly I'm on my way to county, my last days in Juvy.

I leave on 6/18/08. I just want to tell all homeboys To take care, stay out the system, bros — these puercos.

**-Knuckles**

**From The Beat:** There's nothing funny about dreaming of chilling with the family. That's what we all dream about. By the time this is published, you will be out of here, so we hope you write us from wherever and tell us what's going on in your life — and whether you're any closer to seeing this dream come true.

## Why I'm Locked Up

Well I am locked up for possession, sales, and running away from my group home with my home girl. We were on the run for a cool minute, but then I got caught up with my homeboy. I've been in here for two months. Well I'm out to everyone stay up.

**-Flaco**

**From The Beat:** These are the consequences you will always face if you continue doing what you do. Now you have to face it. We hope this teach you the right lesson you need to learn. Homeboys bring plenty of problems.



## Evil Can Be So Disappointing

Before I got locked up, every night I would have hopeful or peaceful dreams. I would talk to my boyfriend, who always told me that he had horrible nightmares every night. I couldn't figure out why, neither could he. But since my first day of incarceration, I have had horrible nightmares every night that wake me up, or I wish that I could wake up from.

In one nightmare, I was in my house with my mom and my older brother. There was a "spirit" of some kind, dark and cloaked, yet tangible and as real as a human. I watched as it possessed a young girl on the street and then she stabbed herself. I was running around with my mom locking all the doors, but there were irregularly so many, like twenty. I remember stabbing the creature, but my brother couldn't see it and he was making fun. But I went into his room and he was frightened, saying, "It's in here... its in me," and he grabbed a shovel. My mom came in, started crying, and threw me a skinny pole screaming, "To save your brother, you must stab the creature out of him!" She was screaming, "Do it now! Please!"

So in my dream, I stabbed him many times. But I saw no creature. Then my mom told me: "You have to suck the thing out of him!" I did and I could literally feel all the hatred flowing into me. I was the creature.

I woke up and sat up, instantly remembering I was in the hall and I felt like ice. It was 4 a.m., and I could not go back to sleep. I have no idea what it means, because that "evil" has never been a part of my brother's life.

Maybe that "evil" is the disappointment my brother feels as my crimes were forced onto his thoughts. My brother is very disappointed in me as I am with myself and I wish it could be some other way. My mom has been like a mediator, trying to assure him I'm still a good person and to me that he still loves me. I only hope that time will fix my thoughts, the situation, and the nightly nightmares resulting.

**-Nina**

**From The Beat:** This is a great piece of writing and really takes us into the dream world, or nightmare world in this case. Dreams are the key to our inner psyches, at least according to Freud. So, it seems like you know what you need to do.

## To Kristell

There's no girl in the world better than mine.  
If we were going for looks, I'd be ugly and you'd be fine.  
If we were coins, I'd be a nickel and you'd be a dime.  
If I were to tell you I didn't love you then I'd be lying.  
If you were to tell me you didn't love me then I'd be crying.

You want me to change, and baby, I'm tryin'.  
But you stick with me no matter what 'cause you're so sweet and kind.

'Cause there's no girl in the world better than mine.

**-King Chino**

**From The Beat:** This is a tight little love poem, KC. We hope you'll be able to express your love more directly soon. Leaving love behind is one of the worst parts of handing away your freedom. So, when you get it back, hold on to it!

## Haiku

One day I got caught  
It was really terrible  
I am still here today

**-Trays**

**From The Beat:** You'll get out one day and things won't be so terrible anymore.

## Punishment

Punishment does not stop you from anything. It is up to you and yourself only. You have to have the desire and determination to change your foolish ways. I wish homies would learn from their mistakes.

I believe every homeboy/homegirl should be educated and stay out of juvie and prison cause we're losing all you over something you can't comprehend. Y'all need to want to change for yourself – not your mom, dad, grandma/pa, your lady/your man but for yourself. Want to be a better person and stop hitting that tweak. I understand bud and drank is bad, but shhh smoke a stoge instead. And drank – just don't get caught drinking in your room, shoot! But for real, punishment don't help it's really up to you.

**-Mercedeez**

**From The Beat:** Changing for yourself is really good advice, but perhaps using other as an inspiration is a good way to start.

## Birthday!

Happy birthday to me  
This brings me no glee  
To be spending my birthday  
In this facility  
Happy birthday to AnonymousOne

**-AnonymousOne**

**From The Beat:** Well this is The Beat saying Happy belated Birthday to you too, and we hope that when you get out you'll stay out. So you won't have to miss anymore birthdays!

## Stupid Decisions

Me and my friends did a crime together two weeks after I got back from court. Then when I went home, so I can go watch my brother's son, the cops came six cars deep. Then the cops came in my house and put handcuffs on me in front of my little brother and my brother's son.

Then I got in the hall I was thinking what I was doing? Why I was stupid? Now I got ranch with all of my friends, then when I'm at the Ranch I know that I'm going to have to try for my family!

**-Kevin**

**From The Beat:** It's a given that you are now able to understand that what you do effects those around you. You already know the negative affects, now try doing some positive things so you can get a positive outcome.

## The Hood

Hey Beat what's up? Well today I want to write about when I was younger and this took place when I was in 7th grade, and I attended J.W. Fair Middle School and serio pedo that school was crazy 'cause the first day I stepped in that school, half of my life changed 'cause that's where I started smoking, drinking and gang-banging and the problem was that at the age of 12, I wasn't realizing what I was getting into 'cause to me all of those rayetas (riots) and crazy shhh I used to do was all fun, but now that I'm a little older, I think to myself like them esos dias were firme (those days were fine) but now that I'm locked up, screw it, that's just the way it is in the varrio.

Well look Beat to be straight up I'm kinda crazy. So don't judge me 'cause I know you are.

**-Lil' Silent**

**From The Beat:** We won't judge you, we'll let the system do that, since this is where you sit today. AS for being crazy, hope one day you gain some maturity, we would hate for you to be an old man doing crazy stuff in a prison yard or in the SHU, one day then y ouwake up full of regret. It can happen!

## Avoiding A Prison Sentence

There are many ways to avoid a prison sentence  
 There are many ways to commit a crime  
 There are many ways to go a different path  
 There are many ways to do your time  
 There are many ways to take advantage  
 There are many ways to waste your life  
 There are many ways to change your mind  
 There are many ways to stay the same

-Adrian

From The Beat: Your pieces are always really well thought out poems. We appreciate your attention to language, rhythm and subject matter.

## Worst Day Of My Life

A couple of days ago it was one of the worse days of my life. I got sentence to 6-8 months Ranch and have to wait a few months to go to the Ranch, so it's dead time. The worst part is that on the outs I got lots of things to do and lots of people that care about me and in here it's like nobody care about you. All you do is look out for yourself hoping you don't get roughed up!

The other worst thing is my family and street family, not gonna see them for like at least a year. So it sucks! Also I have to miss my middle school graduation, party and summer. And now I have to waist it with a bunch of guys.

-Cuong

From The Beat: It is these simple things that when you are away from your understanding holds the basic functions of life. It's sad to hear you're missing another birthday do to incarceration, at least you'll be out for the next one, there's many that's locked up that'll never see a birthday on the streets ever again, so count your blessings.

## Why I Am Not Comin' Back

Well I'm not feeling the topics, so I'm gonna write on how I'm not gonna come back. I'm not gonna come back 'cause I just saw my mom and grandma today and they looked sad, so that makes me mad 'cause I'm not on the outs taking care of my family, I'm in here sitting in a room by myself, so that's why I'm not gonna come back to this gay routine of having to listen to counselors all day.

So when I get out the ranch, I'm gonna just chill on smoking and drinking and just chill with my family 'till pencil meets paper. God bless San Jose and The Beat!

-Mondo

From The Beat: Chill on the partying until you are off probation. Be present for your family and life will only get better.

## Life's A Trip

Life's a trip when you find yourself in a car with a bullet hole in your leg.  
 Life's a trip when you find out the person you look up to only cares about one thing,  
 his hood rat lady.  
 Life's a trip when you find out that the hyna you love had cheated on you  
 because you smoke weed.  
 Life's a trip when you're locked up and no one writes to you,  
 when your jefa won't even come see you,  
 Well now you know that life's a trip when you are living your crazy vida.

-Lil' Vago

From The Beat: Yes, life is trip, and it's tragic too given what you have and continue to experience. What can you do differently so you do not have to experience what you wrote about? Are you ready to change?

## Day Dream

One day, I was counting the bricks in my room, and I stopped at this funny looking one with blue letters on it. Then, everything got blurry. I started to think of what the homies were doing right now, then thought of how we used to run the business perfectly, but everything got messed up, everything in my sight got clear, and I realized I was day dreaming...

-Bay Husalah

From The Beat: This piece really captures the feel of what it's like to daydream back to your life, especially when you are locked up.

## Being Sold A Dream

I just got back from my visit. I found out my father didn't keep his word about taking custody for me. That just messed up my dreams in the ass sideways. I planned on living with him, and starting fresh, but no - he walked out once again.

Due to this, my dreams were sold, gone in the wind. But screw it - when I get out, I'm gonna show him I can make it without him.

-Down But Not Out

From The Beat: This is a powerful, powerful piece. It sounds like your father let you down, but often the best revenge is doing better than anyone expects you to.

## My Dreams

The dream I had was spectacular and made me really open my eyes. It was about me doing a crime that was really bad and I had went to jail, and while I was in jail I had gotten into two fights.

Then one day, I decided to go to Bible study. Then these people started to tell me some true things that opened my eyes. So, the rest of the time I was in here, I started to change my life around by getting pure and walking and talking with God. Then in no time, I was out. So I started going to church and being involved with church more. So then I have been doing right and never came back to jail or got in trouble with the law again.

This dream means that getting in trouble isn't worth it. I could have been doing all that stuff without being in the system. This dream makes me not want to come back to jail and do right when I get out so I don't have to come back.

-Deonte

From The Beat: This is a great dream because it would be very simple to go ahead and make it a reality - the best kind of dreams.

## A Field of Dreams

A lot of people have dreams. Yet they still don't know what they mean. But it's ok cause I'm gonna tell you about one of mine:

One night I had a dream that the cops busted in my door. Guns drawn and put me in handcuffs. They read me my rights up, had my mom crying. I felt bad for making my mom cry like that. Not knowing why I was getting arrested. It's crazy how cops are dicks when it's just you and your mom, but your dad walks in and the cops change up. The cops take me into custody and drop me off at Juvenile Hall. Then I go to sleep, and woke up, O wait! It actually happened. I was just hoping it was a dream.

-J-Stunna

From The Beat: There are some sharp observations in this piece about how authority figures act and how it feels to get arrested out of your home. Is it a dream though? Or a nightmare?

## Dreams

Damn, aye, why can't I wake up from this dream? Why is this happening to me? It all looks so fake. But it's so real. I see demons in my sleep. Monsters in the streets. Their chasing after me! Somebody please wake me up from this dream. Mommy, I need you. I'm scared. Help me, please. I promise I'll be good – just wake me up from this dream.

**-Claudia**

**From The Beat:** What do you do when your nightmare becomes entwined with your reality? Maybe the key is waking yourself up.

## My Version

AHH one, two, AHH look at you.  
Lookin like that fool from Scooby Do,  
you know you smell like pooh.  
AHH yes, you do.  
Don't try to deny  
'cause you know it's true.  
Smoke weed 'till I bleed  
I'm smoking 'cause  
I need to be freed.  
Your hair is so nappy,  
I'm gonna go to Starbucks, get me a Frappi,  
'cause my lips are hella chappy.  
I'm at the stripclub getting a lappy,  
but I got a kid ya  
I'm a papi.  
Don't be sappy, ya'll.

**-Paco Da Taco**

**From The Beat:** Well, well, well, the Baker-Eddie song-writing team has outdone themselves with this one. Perhaps a Grammy nomination awaits you guys?

## Yeah, I Am Tired Of This, But...

Well what up Beat, this right here is just coming from the top of my head. Juvenile Hall sucks! it is hella gay. You have to listen to staff, got to get up when someone tells you to get up, 2 to 3 hours out of your room and that's including school, wearing other people's clothes. Now I'm coo' off all this bullshhh. I'ma get my program over wit and I ain't coming back. LATE.

**- Buddah**

**From The Beat:** Things in this world are easier said then done. How are we going to know you stuck to your word of not coming back to jail and changing your life for the better? Are we going to know because you decided to stay apart of The Beat Family Tree or are you one of those dudes that only knows how to express himself when you're in jail?

## Living A Life of Crime

What I need to do, for me not to get back in this jail cell, is to stay away from drugs and stop doing them, because drugs make me do negative things that I do not want to do.

I might be a young homeboy and there's lots to do in my life, but to live in that healthy life, I need to stop leading myself in the life of crime I got myself into.

Joining gangs is a dice game, I can't believe I am taking the risk! I've been putting it down for my neighborhood about two years now, about to turn 15.

When I got locked up, I finally realized, and opened my eyes and told myself, "Why am I fighting over a neighborhood that don't belong to me or my homeboys?" This whole city belongs to the government.

**-Lil' Knockout**

**From The Beat:** You're right, a total waste of time putting it down for a hood. Proceed to make a better life for yourself. You have the skills, now use them!

## Punishment Is Bad

Punishment is bad for anybody because if you put someone in here, they're going to think about what kind of trouble they can get into on the outs.

When they lock me up all I think about is my family and how they are doing. Sometimes punishment changes people and sometimes it doesn't, it just makes you worse. And sometimes it makes people go crazy in their cell for 23 hours.

To some people every day is a death wish. The time that you're in here does not change you, it's the time that you think.

**-Derrick**

**From The Beat:** Yes, having this time to think is good, now you recognize the problem, and we hope you have the maturity young man to step up and make a change in yourself.

## My Mom

My mom is the sweetest mom ever.  
She shine brighter than the sun.  
When I see her my eyes get blurry from the water in my eyes.

When I look at her now she cries  
and when I see tears coming down from her eyes, I cry  
'cause I never seen tears come down from her eyes.  
And when I see that my heart beats fast, so fast, that it skips a beat and it hurts me so bad I never felt like that.  
When I am in here.

I never want to see her like that again.

**-Lil' Sam**

**From The Beat:** We understand the pain you feel seeing your mom sad and in tears. So, what's going to change Sam? Get your plan together so you do not let the hood swallow you up and then the system will keep you down even longer.

## Love

I love you. I truly do. Thinking about you makes my day, sitting here remembering all the things we used to do. Cartoon, I hella love you.

You're one of the few that I ever felt this way about and it's crazy because I never thought that I would find someone like you. When we're together I feel like my life is a fairytale and going to end happily ever after. You take my breath away and the only thing I can say is that I love you and even if we fall apart – I hope you never forget.

**-Sprinkles**

**From The Beat:** Sprinkles, it is nice to hear that you've found some real love after all the drama. We wish you the fairy tale.

## War

One of my best birthdays was when I was out last year. Well, the fun thing about it was I was having fun chilling with my homies and with my family. It was cool, partying, drinking, chilling in the 'hood on my mind but at the time I wasn't thinking. I was dumb 'cause I was on the run, not giving a hell!

I got caught one month later. Got out two months later did the same thing over again. Now I'm back having my birthday in the hall. But it's ok cause I will be out in eight months having another good birthday, just not on the run.

**-Lil' Buddah**

**From The Beat:** Living a life as a fugitive isn't too much of a hobby many will choose. Let's be thankful you decided to give it up and help us try to get others to realize the same thing. Living life too fast is gonna for sure guarantee a fast death.



## Paradise and Dreams

My dreams are very important in my life. If you want to know why, it's because I am locked up in Santa Clara Juvenile Hall and dreams are what I look forward to every day because it takes me to a place far, far away from Juvenile Hall.

I'm not in the system for a while and as far as believing that my dreams come true I have no idea but pretty much my dreams take me to paradise.

**- Buddah**

**From The Beat:** If one of your kicking it and laid back spots is in your dreams when you're sleep what are you doing when you're woke?

## Mi Vida Loca

What's up Beat? Well this is Spikey, once again, pero this time I'm gonna be writing about mi vida. Pues, I've been living a crazy life with the homies from Mountain View, no joke, 'cause if one of the homies gets in some shhh, he would call another homie and hella homies would be where the other homies at.

**-Spikey**

**From The Beat:** Yeah, Spikey you wrote a piece all about your great hood, but you put way too much on it, and that's why we cut your piece. Next time write a piece all of us can embrace not just you and the homies.

## Blah-Blah Punishment

I don't think any punishment will ever make me change my ways, because no punishment has ever made me change my ways. The only person who can make me change what I do, how I do things, and who I talk to is me. Because really it's who I talk to, how I do things, and the things I do that get me to where I am now, locked up in the Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall.

My advice to anyone who is making bad choices and getting locked up, is change your ways because the delinquent life isn't worth it. Because there's a lot of women out there that you could be a having a good time with, instead of playing bingo in your cell.

**-Braudio**

**From The Beat:** You're right about that! There's not too many people who want to be with someone that's locked up.

## Priority Number One, Avoiding A Prison Future

Avoiding a prison in the future that's #1 thing that I will do because the only way for me to avoid that is to always think positive about myself, and don't think about this place.

Also in the future, I'm always going to tell myself I refuse to go back.

Also another thing that is going to help stay out will be my child that will be born in Nov. I refuse to leave my baby by himself and my girl. I have to be there to support them and love them.

All I do is just pray to God to help me out in the future, to put me in the right path to never come back to this ugly place, because I have people that love me. Well Beat that's all for now. Later.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** We hope you keep saying those phrases for the rest of your days. Keep thinking positive! You are doing it! Remember you will be a father soon, and this little babe will give you the strength and desires you need to move on in life. Also, think about accomplishments and more goals that can provide a better life and future to your future child than you had.

## You Love Him

"You love him"

One day in your dreams  
You're with somebody else

You didn't care or didn't

Even want to call

"You love him"

I had your baby and

I didn't want nothing to do with you anymore.

You broke up with her in a quick minute.

You try to come see me but I refuse.

"You love him"

You always told me you love me.

I was a fool to think you did

Even when I found out you cheated on me

"You love him"

I was locked up

You were out and about

Doing what you did behind my back

But knowing me I love your ass

I wake up from this crazy dream

And I found out it was true

You did cheat on me but

You know I'm not that type

To go behind your back so I took you back and I'm

Trying to stay in love even what you did.

**-P**

**From The Beat:** As we have said often, we prefer not to print love letters. We believe they should be sent directly to one's loved one. But we do make exceptions. And because this is filtered through a very interesting dream, we make an exception here. But in general, please use The Beat to communicate with the thousands of folks who read it, and not just your 'sweetie'.

## Punishment Does Work, For Some

I think that punishment would work for some people, for example, me, I think it's working because when I was in the out, I was a damn drug addict and I did something wrong that I would never forget in my tired life. I would have to pay for what I did, que no? (right)

You know when you are locked up, you analyze your life and you wish you could go back to be in the outs. Now I am facing a long time in a prison, but I realize that this life I was in it's for me.

I wish I could change some things in my life, but this is the real life.

**-Accepting My Choices**

**From The Beat:** Are you sure you wanted to say that this life is for you or isn't for you in your last sentence from your second paragraph? What do you really call real life? Being in here? How can this be a real life? It didn't have to turn out like this in order for you to realize that what you were doing was wrong. This couldn't have been prevented.

## Crazy for My Lost and Found

Once upon a time in the hood some homies come up and they come in a G-ride to go to the other side of town where I saw my brother-in-law and he was all coked out with Christina (crystal meth) he had his pupils wide open he looked like two lightbulbs on in a room, then we picked him up and more Christina well he didn't even know where we were at, we were at a store in the back of the store then we dropped him off in his hood and he was patrolling his hood like a body guard at a dance club when we left him he was a lost lil' boy in his hood.

**-Puppy**

**From the Beat:** This is a dark picture of the forgotten around you. Some people go searching for the better things in life in all the wrong places, and end up more lost than they started. We hope you can help him, and not fall into the same lure yourself.

## My Decision

I just wanna take some time to talk a little bit about what I'm going through right now and what's going on.

Well, I had a job for about three months in here. Actually, had one job, quit, and got another one. But anyways, yeah, I actually got to go out there and be free for awhile. I bet anybody in this place would have loved to be me. It was cool going out there - at least in the beginning. But things just turned terrible for me out there. I would come back sadder than when I first came here. And all because of what...my boyfriend.

We are just going through it right now. I hate coming back to this place, so this is what I did. I told them I didn't wanna go out anymore more, and I quit my job. Yeah, I know it's stupid of me. Believe me, I know this. But I just feel it's the best thing for me right now, and I gotta do what I think is best for me, right?

I love him, and when it's good with us, we're best friends. But when it's bad, man it's bad! I only got a few days left here, so I'm just hoping for the best when I step outta here. I just hope I don't regret my choice, but I feel it's best for me right now. I will do the rest of my time without any stress or depression. Here I go. I'm ghost Beat!

**-Genevieve**

**From The Beat:** We don't think you're crazy. You know yourself and what your limits are. You made the best choice, considering the circumstances, that you could. You factored in that you had only a short time left in the hall. You wanted to maintain your sense of balance and stay cool and get out. Who knows - if you really liked that job, and did well at it, perhaps you could explain the circumstances, and just maybe - they'd let you return. But again - you're calling the shots. It's your life. And we wish you well.

## I Try

What it is, well the topic is punishment. Well I think about man this is hella gay up in the hall, but, like it's my first time up in here and it seem like I can't get out. I try so hard but it's so hard to do good. I'm tryin' and I'm doing it for you, to do good for your Beat and I'm going to go back to school for you and do good for you, but tell me how do you get in the piece of the week? I try so hard to get up in the piece of the week! Well let me know what's good.

**-Babyboy**

**From The Beat:** You don't do nothing for no one until you have had first done something for yourself. If you're not ready to change for the benefit of yourself first, the purpose for doing good is overlooked. Your time for the piece of the week will eventually manifest in the brilliance of your writing.

## Avoiding A Prison Future

My plan to avoid prison is to stay away from violence, trouble, and stay away from hanging out with wrong people. I don't ever want to come back to juvenile hall or any kind of jail.

My goal is to really avoid anything that will get me in any kind of trouble. I am not going to hang out with people that want to get involved in fight, gangs, rob other people or try and hurt other people.

I want to take my time as basically a lesson learned and move on with college and working and stay in a straight life with no violence, trouble, drama, police, fighting or anything else.

**-Moving On**

**From The Beat:** Great thoughts! What did it take you to realize this? Please tell us. We need to know to save many other lives. Right on! Keep thinking positive and do what you gotta do. We believe in you, and we have the feeling that you are going to make it.

## Avoiding A Prison Future

Avoiding a prison future is gonna be kind of hard, because I might get sentenced two to a few years at YA, then maybe go to prison or something I'm getting charged for.

Because it was gang-related, I might get more time. So, now I'm just waiting for my court to see what the judge got to say. So 'till then, I'm a do more. Best to stay out of trouble...To locked up, stay up!

**-Detained And Ignorant**

**From The Beat:** You're taking this issue as if it were a joke. If we were in your shoes, we would be begging that they won't give you all those years. To spend a few years in jail, could lead you to spend the rest of your days in prison. It all depends how you behave? So how are you planning to deal with these years? We recommend you to do your best in getting out ASAP.

## Bad Dreams

I think I had one of my bad dreams this past week. I was just sleeping and then I just had a dream that I was at home. Then there were some of my family, and then all of the sudden, I woke up and I was in juvenile hall, which really sucked.

**-Smokey**

**From The Beat:** That really sucks. Some day that dream will come true. You just have to make an effort to make a reality and keep it a reality once you get it. Are you down for that?

## What's driving me crazy

Waking up looking at the sunshine through my five inch window drives me crazy. Waiting on mail that never comes drives me crazy. Just knowing that I've been here for 5 months with not one visit drives me crazy. Knowing I'm in my town of San Jose and I can't do nothing, drives me crazy. This life drives me crazy.

**-Emilio**

**From The Beat:** These are some of the most frustrating things in the world: being locked up for something that seems to flow through you rather than from you. But there's always that sunshine. There's always an end to those five months, and there's always a town outside the walls to give reality to dreams.

## Snitch

People sometimes have to pay  
Things like this never stay okay  
Talking smack but can't back it up  
It's shhh like this that you get hit in the gut  
Messing with me ain't no game  
I got something for you it's F.A.M.E.  
Nothing is free we all have to pay  
So why you always running away  
Why you make it so difficult. It's a simple game we play  
So come out, come out and show your face  
Please believe I'll be on your case  
You were once the homie who ride or die  
But now you're that punk with his last goodbye  
So when you see us no need to cry  
And don't give me that "At least I tried"  
Because I'll only put you in torture longer  
It's nothing for me, I'm only getting stronger  
With nothing but the thoughts of your punk ass  
Sad to say you were the characteristic of a snitch.

**- Lefty**

**From The Beat:** Well, Lefty, the world is warned. The real question is: what is so special that you have to hide it? If you do things bad enough to have to cover them up, you put your life in the hands of a few people who could be snitches or not. But if you stay strong and do good, you'll be free of snitches forever.

## September 2007

Was crackin' Beat, it's the homebody Dopey again. Well I'm going to write about the time I did at the hall.

Well I'll start it like this, It was September 17th, 2007 when I got caught up. It was my first day at school, it was coo', I seen some girls you know like this one she was in my first period. So you know I got at that, we chilled after school and did our thing, then I left her cause a homie wanted to chill, "you know". So I did.

We got a bottle of some E and J, we pounded it, then smoked some bud, got high, then I left. Then I was just kickin' it in the streets, hustling some skril so I could buy more bud, so I got some skril. I was on my way to go buy a sack, then I got caught up by the cops.

They were saying I pulled a knife on someone so they took me in, then they sent me to the Ranch. I got in a fight, then failed, came back to the hall, then sent me back to the Ranch, then I ran with a homeboy.

I was out for five days, then I got caught up, then went to the Ranch again, then I ran. I was out for a month, then got my lady pregnant, then got caught up again, and now I'm looking at group home for 6 to 9 months.

This time I'm really going to do my time and get out to be there for my baby, but not for my baby's mama. But tell then I be back, late.

**-Dopey**

**From The Beat:** You are only apart of the system as long as you want to be. The longer you fool around the longer you stay in jail within each time of your arrest and the longer you miss out on not only your life but also your baby's life too.

## Various Types Of Punishment

I think punishment should be used for crimes that are violent or that are felony. Depending on the crime there should be different ways of punishment.

**-Carl**

**From The Beat:** Do you deserve the punishment you got for what you did?

## For Now I'll Just Dream

I know that dreams are just when you sleep and that they're not real, but still, at least once in a while you can just say they are. It just gives you a chance to step out of reality and out of being locked up, and to dream about something you like. For now, all I can do is dream.

**-Gloria**

**From The Beat:** Dreams are real, but only while you're dreaming. And there are ways that your dreams can actually help you in your waking life. While they are usually not 'literally' true - they may give you an idea about concerns that you haven't yet found a way to talk about. And then again, they may just be nocturnal entertainment - your own private movie theatre.

## This Crazy Dream

I had this dream in which I was getting chased by a flying doughnut. I was in like New York and I was running hella fast and this giant sprinkle doughnut, of the size of the moon, was just shooting people and melting buildings with it's laser vision. Its sprinkles were like the size of a bus, and they were falling everywhere. I was dodging them like every two seconds, and then I got hit with the laser and melted. Then I woke up and I think the reason for having this dream was to never trust a sprinkled doughnut.

**-Born To Skate**

**From The Beat:** That was a funny and an unbelievable dream! We're glad to see that you're not melted.

## Livin' In The Streets

When the sun sets down in the hood  
The homeboys out there up to no good  
Postin' up in the block

With their filas and their glocks  
Ready to put one in a fool's dome  
Getting ready to get out of control  
For wearin' the wrong color or throwin'  
Up the wrong number.

You'll find them dead in the corner  
Livin' everyday, livin' every night  
Out there looking for a fight  
Livin' a messed up life

Only protection a gun and a knife  
The truth is it happens to everybody  
Out there trying to be loyal to the hood  
No matter what you bang

Violence will always come and harm  
Stressin' and relaxing with Mary Jane  
Even though it's not right

It's our only way to survive  
Once you're in the hood you  
Live up to their ideals and their rules

It's a "code of honor" we have  
Willing to follow until we fall.

**-Lil' Bone**

**From The Beat:** You describe your hood with really amazing precision and vision. And sometimes it seems a lost fight if "the law" takes on "the hood." But the truth is, there's far more to it than that. Do not give in to simply accepting either side without thinking. Do what is best for you and your family, not just what is told to you.

## American Soldier

I am an American soldier.

I am a warrior and a member of a team.  
I serve the people of the United States  
And live the Army values.

I will always place my mission first.  
I will NEVER accept defeat, quit, or leave a fallen comrade. I am disciplined physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills, I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.  
I STAND READY to deploy, engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America  
in close combat I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

**-Droc**

**From The Beat:** Maybe the purpose of your life is to become a strong leader that can change the point of view of this country or the entire world. You are the future. Make something good of your desires. Make it happened!

## House Arrest Was My First Punishment

My first serious court punishment was house arrest. It sucked, 'cause it was like being a dog on a leash. I know I'm not gonna end up in prison.

This is a life lesson that I'm learning from. I'm one of those people that has to learn first hand how things are, but I know I'm not gonna learn from this and use it as motivation to do good.

**-Stubborn**

**From The Beat:** Your motivation to do well is not helping you because in your head you are thinking to end up in prison. Remember you will always get what you really desire in life. If prison is what's in your mind, that's what you will get.



## To A Special Someone

I promise to you baby my feelings are staying this way.  
Neva wanna hurt you.

Neva wanna leave you alone.

Everytime I'm bii your side is when I'm really at home.

Always and forever that's a promise I made.

You're the reason why I'm smiling

every start of the day

and I hope you know I mean it,

every time that I say,

I love you always and forever

and it will always be the same.

I wanna be there for you,

sharing laughter with you.

When I look into your eyes,

I know our love is really true,

and there's nothing I wont do to see my baby smile.

Remember you can always come to me every time you're  
feelin down.

No girl can take your place  
and love me like the way you do.

So I'm going to hold on tight

'cause I need you by my side.

It's me and you babe.

I need you in my life.

**-Yung T**

**From The Beat:** You need her in your life, and we bet that she needs you as well. Are you making an effort to be with her since you love her so much?

## Punishment

I think punishment is right to a certain extent. Like punishment for a crime against the community like a serious crime like rape, murder, kidnapping, and just any other not so serious crimes against the communities.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** Basically you are saying that punishment should only be for those who commit serious crimes. So, what do you think you deserve as a punishment?

## Nightmare In My Cell

About almost a month I got locked up, I had a dream about my mother getting killed in my kitchen house. I woke up in my bed, sweating, with teats on my eyes, thinking about my mother if she's ok or if my sister is ok.

I think this is a lesson for leaving my family, alone without a father and a son.

**-Mariguas**

**From The Beat:** Maybe it is! We don't know what exactly dreams means, but your obligation is to always be there for your loved ones. They need you by their side. They need a man to feel protected at home. You're that man. For the next time, if you don't have more to say, don't write over the questions we ask from The Beat's topic sheets. We want the real thing within you.

## Prison

What up Beat! To be honest, I can't avoid prison. The way my mentality is and also how my gang was taking me, I'm going to end up in prison 'cause my theory is that I love my 'hood and I wont ever walk away from it.

So if I have to put it own for my hook and I end up getting locked up and going to prison, I ain't even tripping. My hood is my family, it's all that I have.

**- Firme**

**From The Beat:** So be ready to spend the rest of your life in prison or die for the "hood" you claim to love. You don't even know what you are saying, but someday you will if you continue thinking like this.

## Flow

I'm a youngsta about my cabbage  
these suckas want funk

best believe I'll let 'em have it,

I do that click-clack-quick-with the bang-bang,

I'm from that city where we gang-bang,

And skeet skurt sideways in the hood how how

White beata tatted up homie 'cause we sick bro,

Hock to the brain 51-50 off that liquor mayne,

I can't stop 'till I'm sick'a mayne,

15 in the game and I still shine.

And you know I'm still bustin' 'till I get mine,

On the mic' I'm psychedelic with a savage flow,

You come to my hood best believe I be quick to

Let 'em know.

**Chorus:**

In this hood we got game to be sold

Anything that we touch turning into gold I know

You heard about us with that heart so cold

**Flow:**

San Jose be the city 'cause I'm puttin' it down

White Boy comin' out 'cause you know I been found,

And I'm sittin' on my throne with my big ass crown

**-White Boy**

**From the Beat:** You certainly have a gift for rhythm and rhyme. Though we were close to cutting this flow from The Beat, given there are many who will read this and hear the glorifying of your hood in this rap. But if you really are so talented, you can find a way to help yourself and to have fun while also caring. Because it takes real skill and real heart to balance those things, and maybe you're one of those who can.

## Dreams

What's good Beat? Today's topic is dreams. I had a dream just last night that I was with my family eating dinner.

Then I was with my homeboys drinking a 40oz. Then I was with some girl I don't even know. It all happened so fast. I miss my family and my homeboys and hella girls. Damn, but most of all I miss the streets!

**-Firme**

**From The Beat:** Even in your dreams, you dream that you are back on the streets. Thinking like this, you won't get too far. Trust us!

## Seeking College

To avoid a prison for me is knowing that the way I live is not the way I want to live. I want a future in college, possibly going to the army and live life right to party all night.

**-Carl**

**From The Beat:** What else do you want for your future? To party is not the problem. The problem is the things you do during or after the party. So be careful!

## What Your Dreams Mean

What's up Beat, what's crackin? Well I'm just chilling waiting to go to the Ranch. Well I'm going write about my dreams.

The best dream I had was when I was chilling with the homies, drinking pisto (drinks) and chilling with some hyna. We were partying like rockstars. That dream I got a lot of lovin' too and then I woke up.

I wish I could have dreams like that every day. Well till next time Beat and everyone stay up and till pencil meets paper. Late.

**-Abrhm**

**From The Beat:** It's a hell to wake up to the real world. Isn't it? Prevention exists though. You just need to find it.

## What I Wanted From My Parents

Some things I always wanted but never got from my parents were love, respect, patience and time. Love: because my parents loved me; but then they did not. Like my mom, she was never there. My father was always disrespectful because he hit me. And like I said, my mom was never there. My father showed me no patience because he was always quick to hit me and cause me physical pain. And last but not least, time because he was never there. He was always at a bar or party.

- Faith

**From the Beat:** The things you say you wanted from your parents are what each of us need in our relationships to feel valued and secure. It is unfortunate when those who are supposed to love us the most seem unable to do so. Although your parents did not show you a lot of love and respect, we hope you realize that you deserve both.

## Mindset Matters

I would go to school some days, but most days I would not want to go was because I had things to do at night. Then, I couldn't wake up in the morning, so I just wouldn't go.

I think spending time locked up might make the problem better because usually someone's mindset matters. If someone's mind is set on changing, then while they're locked up they're going to be thinking about changing.

Usually, when people drop out of school they usually get a job. I thought about dropping out, but I didn't because every person I knew was telling me to not drop out because my education comes first.

-Destiny

**From The Beat:** Those people are exactly right. Education= #1 or at least it should be. A young person like you shouldn't be choosing "night activities" over school. As a matter of fact, nobody should be. If you're a dropout and get a legal job, do you think the pay will be good? No. Do you think it'll be easy to find a job? No. So good for you on not dropping out! And education is one of the only things that'll lead you to a successful life.

## Caring

The C is for the countless care she shows me everyday  
The A is for the air I breathe in every single way  
The R is for how real that this life can really be  
The I is for the inspiration that she gives to me  
The N is for the nothing I would not do for her love  
And the G is for giving me all of the above.

-Jonathan

**From The Beat:** You express passion in your piece for someone. Is this someone your mother? ...your girlfriend? What is it that her love inspires you to do? What are the emotions she experiences when you are in detention?

## My Parents

Something that I always wanted from parents, but never got was for my mom to stay out of my life. From my dad, to be there when I needed him the most. Like for him to tell me how boys would be and for him to show up at all my games, the holidays and birthdays. I really do not have too much more to say except I wanted him around more.

- Janice

**From the Beat:** Janice, you needed both parents involved initially for your existence. It sounds like you are disappointed in both parents for a variety of reasons. Your feelings are legitimate and need a voice, but is that all there is to your parents? What more can you tell us? Can you think of what you value individually about your mom? ...about your dad?

## Party Animal

What's up everyone? This is your boy aka Cuban most people know me like that. I just want to talk a lil bit about me. I am a real ninja, so get it straight homies. All you guys on the juvenile hall like me...hope can learn something from my life and get away from the streets.

I was born in Cuba, June 23, 1990. I moved to the USA with the best parent on the world and my everything, my lil "sister".

I was a young teen when I moved to this big city. It was hard for me, 'cause I didn't speak English, but now is harder since I start hanging around with wrong persons.

Like all you guys I thought my hood was everything, but now I see I am wrong, your family is everything. I never lost my parents, 'cause don't matter what they were there for me. But I lost my job since I have to wake up early in the morning, 'cause I have night school.

On the weekends it was harder for me, 'cause I am a party animal. Knowing I have to work at 2:00 am, I get home all drunk from the last party the end up around 6:00am. Usually I just get home and go to work like that. They use to call me "Drunk" at work until I get fired. But I wasn't addicted to drugs and alcohol. My addition was the parties. I have my own lil party crew and "tu sabe" just have fun. I always keep fresh wit' J's and Nike also my monkey pants you know.

I am known in the street but it is time to change. I was doing good out there. Since I get on probation I didn't want to violate. 'Cause I'm a be 18 really soon but I was in the wrong place with the wrong person when a cop pull me over for no reason but "tu sabe" how this cops are see you are young the try to find a way to stop you. Then I end up here lock up between these walls. I am totally innocent but 'cause I was the driver I get all the charges. The rest of my homies they going to go to some juvenile system but I might get charged as an adult I have court June 11. One more week to go.

Want to get out, I miss the best parent on the world, also my lil sister. Y mis abuelos. So I'm gonna get out and start a new life complete. All you guys should do the same. I might write some poems tomorrow. My arm hurts of all this writing, so I am out aka Cuban peace.

-Luis

**From The Beat:** Kuban, you have made a gallant effort to adjust to life in America. We applaud your English and encourage you to continue writing. What steps can you take to demonstrate to your mother how much she means to you? How can you turn your love for partying into a career that allows you to maintain your freedom and enjoy life at the same time?

## This Is Me!

I am a fourteen year old girl who has brown eyes and brownish blondish hair. I'm somewhat sensitive. I love sports, which my favorite is volleyball. I don't like when my emotions get thrown away. I have a really cute personality. I love when people make me laugh. It feels good. I love people who love me. I hate being left out. I am five feet, very short, but it fits me perfectly. I love to challenge myself as well as accomplish my tasks in life. My friends say I have a very outgoing attitude. I try my best to accomplish what I need to do. I love to draw.

-Angelina

**From The Beat:** Angelina you are able to write about your interests and positive qualities. We believe this is a powerful step in the right direction. We hope you will invest time and energy into developing these qualities and that you will surround yourself with positive influences. How can you use these great qualities to avoid future encounters with detention? Tell us more about what brought you to this point in your life and where you are headed in the near future.

## Crazy Life Won't Stop

Life such a bummer for me. I'm the type of girl that lets anger rule over me-and-what I mean by rule is take over my life. Me-and-my family just have no connection between us. We can't even sit- and -eat together or do much anything. My family-they're such good people in life-they can't something. I feel like I don't belong in the family. I'm just too much trouble for the world I'm in. I'm the type of person that acts, then thinks. It's crazy to me.

Life is a miserable place. I hate it. I get judged a lot by the way I dress - creased up Dickies, plain T, Nikes, and my Doggers. If you picture that, you know how I am.

My friends say I'm too down. It ain't even that. It's just to my point that I say screw world. I'm lost in this crazy life. I'm confused, anger-and -just much madness or sadness. All I can say is that I hope to God someday I can just be happy- and -change.

To the gente that read this keep your head up like Tupac says even when the road...well it's just that crazy vida. Stay up! I'm out.

**-Jazmin**

**From The Beat:** Jazmin, we do not have any easy answers for you to resolve or dissolve your pain, but we applaud your courage to write about what you are facing. There are many roads that people can take to work through pain, disappointment and frustrations in life. You can use your anger to propel you towards positive changes or you can use your anger to destroy yourself and your relationships. When caught up in a vicious cycle: anger-destructive act-anger and so on and so on, it is good to just stop what you are doing and take a time out. Detention can be a time out for you to stop the "crazy life" and begin to listen to your heart and others around you who care about you...are there any ideas that would help you honor yourself and your life without ignoring your pain? Listening to those who care about you may offer you another perspective on who you are and what you have to live for.

## I'll Make It

I'm trying to make it even though they don't want me to  
I'm trying to listen up, but I'm doing just what I wanna do

it's hard to say no to a drug when it's in front of you  
the teacher's teaching math, but I'm learning what a gun do

trying to figure out how I'm a make it from the one to the two

the time is looking good but the crime is what I'm running to

keeping my life on track 'til the tape is what I'm running through.

**-Jonathan**

**From The Beat:** Cutting the tape/Sprinting for 1st place/Get ur life on track/Take ur life back/Be the best/you can be, test/your ability/to achieve/We too believe

## Be Gone

I think what needs to be done is that all the drugs in the world should be gone so there would be less crackheads around where I live and Jim can stop sleeping on my stairs at night and it would help me more because I do have a drug problem and maybe if it was not around me I'd stop using it because I know it's not good for me or anyone else.

**-Sabaha**

**From The Beat:** Wouldn't it be nice if there were no evil or temptation in the world? Unfortunately there will probably always be drugs, violence and poverty. However, we can allow the bad things in this world to consume us and break us down, or we can become stronger, wiser people by resisting and fighting back. There are a lot of resources out there to help you with your drug problem. Take advantage of them, and never, never give up fighting for your sobriety!

## Life Keeps Flowing

Waking up in the morning, not wanting to go to school.  
Instead of learning all I can I rather go and act a fool.

Every time I stop to think of choices I make.

How my life ends up and not having no faith.

I didn't care what I did. I just thought about myself,  
not thinking about my family or worried bout how they felt.

As long as I made the money to get what I need.

I didn't care about school or get taught how to write or read.

I was holding a weapon as things went through my mind.

I wanted my life negative when really I was blind.

When I think about it now, it'll sweep me off my feet.

But life keeps flowing like a leaf falling off the tree.

**-Javaughn**

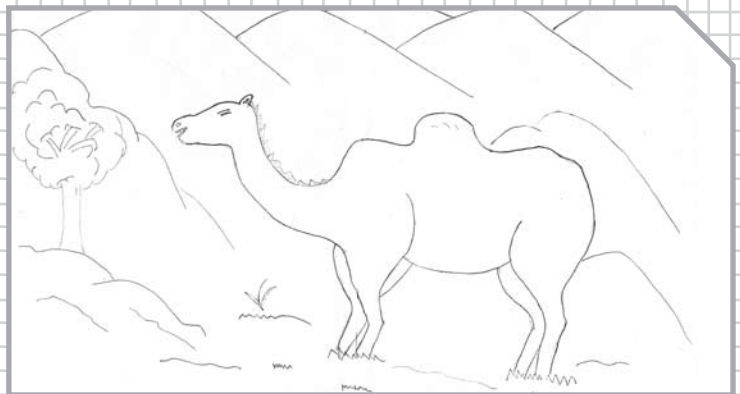
**From The Beat:** Your passion for rhythm and rhyme are evident. Are you developing these skills in the community? We encourage you to choose a writing weapon over a weapon of lethal force. Making money from writing flows or poetry may not pay BIG, but you'll experience life in a BIG way if you stop and think before you choose. How could you use your writing skills to impact the world around you in a positive way?

## Moving On!

Moving on from the bad behaviors and the things your parents said would either put you in the dirt or behind bars. Well...guess what? They were right. Now most of us are sitting here, locked up in a detention facility, wishing we would have listened. I know it's not easy moving on, giving up your homies or that thing that makes you feel like your high in the sky. I'm giving it up now! That's how I'm moving on. Do the same... change.

**-Jordan**

**From The Beat:** We like this piece. Your exhortation is straight to the point. We hope you will heed your words once you obtain your freedom.



## Stopping

Situations are tough when you think you know  
everything about nothing

Time without meaning

Over run by stupidity

Polluting without need

Pursuing the unusual

Innocent without remorse

Never admitting guilt or harm

Getting back without need

**-Jordan**

**From The Beat:** Jordan, your writing is thought provoking! You pack a punch with very few words! How did you develop these skills? What do you desire to do with your life? What is it you need to stop the most? We are glad you started writing, for reals!



## My Punishment Is Excessive

When I got caught drunk, I was punished by being handcuffed to a chair and got yelled at. After that I was brought to juvenile hall at 12 pm., and left locked in my room until eight in the night. The next day I went to court and the judge said that I had a alcohol problem and kept me detained for two weeks.

He said when I get out, I had to go to AA meetings five times a week, and I had to show the judge every week or he was gonna lock me up. He told me that next time I get into problems with alcohol, he was gonna keep me here for more than two months. I don't think that's right—he shouldn't punish me like that.

**-Lonely**

**From The Beat:** Why don't you use your time in Juvy to seriously think about getting some help, now that you have no access to liquor? Don't wait until you're older to stop drinking; there's no worse punishment than becoming a drunk with no home like some people you see on the streets...

## More Time

I'm tired of being locked up in here. I know it's only been a month, but I can't take it no more. I feel like I'm losing my mind. My PO was going to get me out today, June 12th, but he didn't show. Now my guess is he wants me to do my rest of the time I got in here—that's another 50 days. This is my first time in the halls. I was goin' to get out on the bracelet.

If my PO would have shown up, but he didn't, so now I'm like, damn, I wanna go home, but I can't, because of the decision I made 50 days ago.

**-Marlon**

**From The Beat:** What do you think now about the decision you made fifty days ago? Would you make it again if you were free now? What has being in juvy taught you about how that decision has affected your life?

## Too Old

So I'm sitting here, thinkin' 'bout what the hell is wrong with me. Why do I keep messing up and keep ending up in here? Maybe I'm just stubborn as hell and I'm not tryna hear no one, that's why I'm growin' up in the halls, but I'm gonna be eighteen next year, so I'm gonna have to step my game up.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** Don't let yourself get mentally institutionalized, because your mental freedom is even more precious than your physical freedom. Now that you are becoming an adult, can you tell us what you think that freedom should look like?

## Punishment

Everybody thinks, by sending me to juvenile hall, dat I'ma change my ways and become a better person. I've been in here eleven freakin' times and don't you think that by now I'm not going to change, I'ma keep being stubborn, hard-headed, crabby me...?

Juvenile Hall ain't no punishment, it's freakin a day care (that's costing my family hella money and otha problems.) Instead of them having us locked up, they should teach us in a different way. Give us activities in our community so we can stay outta trouble. But, yeah, to me, me goin' to placement or being locked up ain't a punishment, it's just a waste of my sweet time.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** Your community should definitely invest in activities for you youth. What would you suggest? A swimming pool; a library; sculpture, painting, drawing, musical instrument, dance, swimming lessons? What would keep you inspired and trouble-free?

*Juvenile Hall ain't no punishment, it's freakin a day care...*

## Almost Eighteen, No More Messing Around

What up, Beat?

When I get out from here I'm going to make a change in my life. 'Cause I am eighteen now, I cannot mess around. And I cannot wait to see my boys and blow one and be happy and go dumb. Yeeeee.

**-X**

**From The Beat:** Good point. What else do you value in your life beyond the hyphy, that you can nurture into a life that can prosper, and make you proud, happy and free?

## My Heart's Getting Colder And Colder

People say they're down  
They say they don't play around  
That they're ready for the pinta-bound  
But it's the other way around  
They ain't down to play  
All they do is pray  
But what I do is for pride  
So tell me, who's down to ride?  
I'm a straight up G  
So ask me, what I see  
Fake people try to be like me  
Trying to earn respect and power  
But I'm on top of the tower  
Playing this game  
In a life with no shame  
You see my life ain't the same  
Getting locked up over and over  
As my heart gets colder and colder  
I'm getting older  
But I'm one of a kind  
This is my rhyme  
And thanks to the one I love  
You know who you are

**-Lonely**

**From The Beat:** Juvies are filled with youth who describe themselves as OGs, and who are in over and over again. ? Does anything in life inspire you beyond your block? Don't let your heart get colder - that's letting the system beat you down.

## What's On My Mind

To be honest right now, the only thing on my mind is me gettin' sent to my placement. I was supposed to have my damn interview for my placement yesterday (Wednesday, June 11, '08), but they didn't show, and I was heated. My mom came to visit me and told me that she talked to my PO and that he told her to bring my clothes on Saturday, because a on Tuesday (June 17, '08) I'm for sure gettin' sent to placement. Even though I'm still heated, I'm not trippin' so much.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** How do you feel about being away from home for so long? Will you be relieved to be away from whatever it is that brings you into juvy? Is the group home in the country? Do you think you'll be able to grow from being there?

## Me-Me, It's All About Me

Me, me, it's all about me  
The girl say she got a boyfriend  
She talkin' 'bout me

See see, the only thing I see  
Is green money  
That's all that I see

E, E, E Pop a lot of E  
It only make me dumber  
That's all that I see

Yee Yee All I say is "Yee"  
We don't say "Yeah" no more  
All we say is "Yee"

Dame, Dame, that is my name  
So when you see me, yell out "Dame"

**-Dame**

**From The Beat:** Dame, you claimed you could rap and you can, but when are you going to put down some raps that are serious about something you care about? Keep trying with your raps. You can do it.



## Avoiding Prison

Avoiding prison is something that I am trying to do, but the way things are going, I really don't know what's going to happen. If I do go to prison for something that I've done, then it's good, because it's the decision that I made, feel me? I'm gonna still rep the squad 'til I'm dead and gone. Even though this the kind of life that gets you killed or in prison, but it seems like I'm just addicted to it, ya dig?

**-B**

**From The Beat:** You're being honest when you write that you're addicted to repping for the squad, but that addiction can be tragic and/or fatal? It can make you a victim, and that's not choosing - that's just letting yourself down, letting your addiction sink you.

## Bein' Punished

I think punishing someone don't always work, 'cause you can punish some as much as you want, but if they still wanna do what they do, they're gonna do it regardless. You gotta want to not do something in order to stop doin' it.

**-Lil' One**

**From The Beat:** So what does work for you? Who or what has affected you so profoundly that it has persuaded you to stop doing something that hurts others and/or sabotages yourself?

## A Dream

One time, when I was goin' out with this boy, I had a dream that I cheated on him with one of our friends, and after, I regretted it, and felt hella bad. Later on in our relationship, I ended up cheating on him with the same friend as in the dream, and we broke up. I really did regret it and felt bad. I regretted it 'cause I really hurt him and I never cheat, and I did. I think my dream was like a warning, but I didn't realize it 'til long after the damage had been done and couldn't be fixed.

Another dream I had one time was when I was in here, the halls. In my dream I was at my house and just livin' my regular life and I remember wakin' up and thinking I was in my bed at my house, but when I actually opened my eyes, I saw the white brick walls and brown metal door, and realized where I really was. That is one of the worst feelings. I've had a lot of those dreams in here.

**-Lil' One**

**From The Beat:** Many people contend that dreams may be your psyche trying to warn you to stop doing something that will harm you. Do you believe that? If so, are you prepared to do whatever your dreams are urging you to do or not do any more?

## My Info

Name: Alyssa

Age: 16

Nicknames: Queen Bee, Junior, Ladie B

Birthday: September 26, 1991

Sign: Libra (baby... all the way)

Fav colors: Purple and green

Fav movie: "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory"

Fav song: "Just a Friend" by Mario

Fav music artists: Lil' Wayne, Mac Dre, Kci-Jo Jo

Fav Food: Chinese

Brother: Chub

Daughter: Miranda (LOL)

Anyways, that's a lil' info on me. Well, I'm out.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** Cool - and for your next list. How about this: Deepest wish, Life's ambition, Personal Motto of Life, Biggest Fear, Favorite Hero, Best skill. We're looking forward to seeing that list next week!

## Punishment Doesn't Stop Me

When I get punished, it doesn't make me stop from the things I do. I get back to the things I do. When I got caught drinking and smoking, I never got a beating. They said I was punished, but I went out and smoked and drank and they didn't punish me. They didn't say nothing. Now that I'm in here, I don't want to come back, 'cause I learned my punishment. When I get out, I hope I do good.

**-Cesar**

**From The Beat:** If no one punishes you when you do something wrong, what can make you stop? Going to juvy? Or having a serious talk with yourself? Sometimes people can give themselves the best advice.

## Ride With My Pride

I ride with brown pride thinking I could hide, but all I do is kill my time. I live day by day night by night because I'll never know the day I die, drop dead with a bullet in my head and when that day comes don't cry just look up in the sky and say goodbye

**-Shadow**

**From The Beat:** No one ever knows the day they'll die. Don't put yourself in a situation that gets you killed sooner then you're meant to pass on. Be proud of who you are and where you come from, just don't do anything that would put you in harms way. Find a positive way to show your pride.

## Drugs

Drugs are one of the problems in my life, and I think probably the biggest one to. I do drugs mostly because of peer pressure, I would rather be clear minded then have my brain smoked out all the time. Wouldn't you?

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Yes, it would be better to have a clear mind then one fogged with drugs. Don't get pulled into peer pressure, follow the right path and stay away from drugs, so you too can have a clear mind.

## From the Hood

The hood  
I love the hood  
My life is no good  
Should I get out?  
I would if I could  
Sunny days  
Wicked ways  
This is what I say  
When they say, get away!  
Women hide their bags  
When they see these rags  
In the hood  
It's all good  
Money, sex and drugs  
Some one call the fuzz 'cause  
In the hood we got love

**-Masino**

**From The Beat:** Masino, it's sad to say, but if you continue thinking the way you are, life for you will only be a life behind bars. Think long and hard if this is the life you want to live.

*Drugs are one of the problems in my life,  
and I think probably the biggest one to.*

## It's Freedom

I think that punishment is freedom. For other individuals that are locked up, it doesn't help. I think we need to be with people who care; not being incarcerated. I'm looking forward to getting out soon.

**-Eduardo**

**From The Beat:** What do you mean when you say "punishment is freedom"? Do you know people who find freedom in being punished? Do you?

## WATSONVILLE

I am from the town of Watsonville. We don't play around in my town. It is small, but well known. It is good that it is small, because you can walk around all day. That is why I love my town. Lots of crazy things happen in my town. I don't know how, but it happens. I was born and raised in Watsonville. I know I will die in my town and I will support my town with pride.

**-I Love Watsonville**

**From The Beat:** Nothing wrong with loving your town. Because you love your town so much, we're guessing you must be doing things to help make it an even better place. A community relies on the goodwill and the good works of its citizens. What good works are you involved in to make Watsonville a better place for all of its citizens?

## On Punishment

Punishment is when you break the law and get a consequence.

**-Alejandro**

**From The Beat:** Alejandro - you must have used a pencil with disappearing lead. We can't seem to find the rest of your piece. Would you kindly look around for it. We know it must be there.

## Punishment

Punishment. Punishment is when you're stripped from your freedom,  
No longer have your friends, and you don't need them.  
Punishment is when you're wearing someone else's smelly clothes  
That smell like toes.  
Punishment is when you have to fight to make something right.  
Punishment is if you're in here  
And someone disrespects you,  
You have to put them to the floor.  
Punishment.

**-Ernesto**

**From The Beat:** Well written poem, Ernesto, though we would argue with you on that last matter - where you feel the need to deck someone who disrespects you. The consequence of that is - yup - more punishment. The idea is to figure out a way to put an end to cycle of bad behavior, followed almost inevitably by....punishment.

## Punishment Is Damaging

There is no punishment successful enough to change someone without damaging their personality. Either someone is incarcerated too long to conform to society, or they aren't in long enough to give them a true impression. In order to change, you have to want it. It just so happens that we're all too stubborn to want to change.

**-Robert**

**From The Beat:** Some people may be that stubborn. But it's a little like taking a hammer and pounding your fingers on purpose, isn't it. That quickly passes from stubbornness to stupidity. And quite obviously, you are not a stupid fellow. When your stubbornness stops paying you dividends, you'll stop being stubborn.



## Por Mis Amigos

Les voy a contra algo de mi vida. Yo vine aqui a este pais pensando que me iba a ir bien, pero no fue así porque empee a tener amigos que no hacen el bien sino que te lleban a hacer maldades, y a peliar por colores. Así fue como empee a venir aqui como no tenía buenos amigos y andaba haciendo cosas malas.

Cuando salga, no hare lo mismo. Ahora tengo otra manera de pensar y de verdad ya no quiero que mi mama se sienta mal. Ella sufre mucho cuando le dan la noticia que estoy encerrado. Estoy dispuesto a cambiar por mi familia, y mi morra.

Ustedes que tal vez piensan que la vida es buena en las pandillas, estan muy equivocado. Piensen bien las cosas antes de hacerlas.

**From The Beat:** Por lo menos ya sabes que fue lo que te trajo a este lugar. Sino quieres volver a este lugar, alejate de los malos migos y busca amigos que te dirijan hacia un camino mejor. Esperamos que escuchen tus consejos y que de verdad empien a hacer bien las cosas.

## For My Friends

I am going to share something about my life. I came to this country thinking that everything was going to go smooth for me, but it wasn't like that because I started hanging with friends who didn't do good but guide you to badness and fight over colors. That's why I started coming here because I didn't have any good friends and doing bad things.

When I get out of here, I don't do the same. Now I have a different way of thinking and I don't want my mother to feel bad. She suffers a lot when she received the news when I get locked up. I am willing to change for my family and my girl.

You, who think life in gangs is good, you're wrong. Think about things before doing something.

**-Sebastian, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** At least you know what brought you in here. If you don't want to come back here, stay away from those friends and look for friends who can guide you to a better road. We hope they listen to your advice and start to do things right.

## Mis Sueños

Hey, que ondas! Les voy sobre mis sueños. Mis sueños son estar con mi morra y ser muy feliz. Todos los días, le pido a Dios que cuando salga de aqui, me ayude a pensar muy bien la cosa antes de hacerlas porque ya no quiero volver.

Siento que me vuelvo loco cuando cae la noche. Por eso, ya no quiero volver ahora que he pensado bien.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que los cumplas con tus sueños. Pensar antes de hacer las cosas, nos parece la mejor ideas de todas.

## My Dreams

Hey, what's up! This is about my dreams. My dream is to be with my girl and be happy. Every day, I ask God that when I get out of here to help me think very well about things before doing something because I don't want to come back.

I feel like I'm going insane when the night comes. That's why I don't want to come back now that I have think well about things.

**-Cangri, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope you make those dreams come true. To think ahead before doing something is the best things to do for us.

## Lo Que Me Esta Volviendo Loco

Me llamo Manuel y tengo 17 años. Ahora me encuentro preso y eso es lo que me tiene frustrado porque no se que va a pasar conmigo.

Corro el peligro de ser deportado a mi pais. Me pongo pensar que si me dan mucho tiempo de cárcel sería mejor que me deportaran a mi pais.

También lo que me tiene alterado es que me dieron una noticia que posiblemente van a transferir a otra cárcel. Solo me pongo a pensar en como sera en aquella cárcel, si seran más estrictos, o si seran más violentos. Todo se lo dejo en las manos de Dios porque se que no me va a abandonar.

**From The Beat:** No te pongas a pensar en como seran los otros lugares. Preocúpate en como salir de este lugar. Vayas donde vayas, manten la fe en Dios en alto y haz lo mejor para salir.

## What's Making Me Go Insane

My name is Manuel and I am 17 years old. Now I find myself locked up and that's what got me frustrated because I don't know what's going to happen to me.

I'm running with risk of getting deported back to my country. I'm thinking that it would be better if they gave a long time than deporting me back to my country.

What also got me stressed out is that they gave me the news that they might transfer me to another jail. I just keep wondering how it is in the next place, if they're stricter, or more violent. I'll leave everything in the hands of God because I now he won't abandon me.

**-Manuel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Forget about wondering how other places are. Worry about getting out of this place. Wherever you go, keep your faith in God very high and do what's best to get out soon.

## Estar Aqui No Es Buena Idea

¡Viva Honduras! Me llaman Duglas. Yo pienso que estar en la prisión no es buena idea. Los errores son de humanos. Pienso que uno recapacita hasta que está adentro, pero hay pensar cuando uno sale a no volver a hacer esas cosas malas.

Pienso que tu familia se preocupa cuando estas preso.

Queremos un consejo sano de ustedes para lo que estan aqui adentro.

Este corto mensaje es todo lo que les puedo decir. Gracias!

**From The Beat:** Nuestro consejo es que le hagan caso a sus familias, se eduquen, y busquen un trabajo legal para que puedan ayudarse y a sus familias. ¿Entonces que seria buena idea de castigo para los que cometen errores?

## Being Here Is Not A Good Idea

Long live Honduras! They call me Duglas. I think being in jail is not a good idea. The mistakes are from humans. I think people reflect over their mistakes when they are in jail, but they have to keep it in mind when they get out to not do bad things again.

You think that your family worries when you're inside.

We want a good advice from any of you for those who are in here.

This short message is all I have to say. Thank you!

**-Duglas, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Our advice would be to listen to your family members, get an education, look for a legal job, so you can help yourself and your family. So, what would be the proper punishment for those who make mistakes?

## Me Castigaron

Mi nombre es Bairon y soy de Honduras. Mi madre me castigaba por diferentes razones.

También recuerdo que mi papa no le gustaba castigarme, pero un día hice algo que no debí haber hecho y me castigó. Me pego con una sogá mojada y no me dejó salir por cinco días a la calle por haber agarrado algo que no me pertenecía.

Yo pienso que el estar en la cárcel es un castigo pero un castigo que lo merecemos por haber hecho algo malo que no debimos haber hecho.

**From The Beat:** ¿Volviste a tocar lo ajeno despues de este castigo? ¿Ya que pasastes por una experiencia de castigo, crees que los castigos ayudan? Creemos que los castigos ayudan mucho, pero no es necesario usaria violencia.

## I Got Punished

My name is Bairon and I am from Honduras. My mother would punish me for different reasons.

I also remember that my dad didn't like to punish me, but one day I did something I shouldn't have done, and he punished me. He hit me with a wet rope, and didn't let me go out of my house for five days because I took something that didn't belong to me.

I think being in jail is a punishment, a punishment we deserve for doing something we shouldn't have done.

**-Bairon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you after this punishment? After the punishment experience, do you think punishment work? We think punishment helps, but violence is not necessary.

## El Castigo Mío

Yo creo que los castigos son buenos porque nos hacen cambiar. En algunos casos, el castigo es lo peor.

Estuve con un compañero que estaba encerrado en el mismo cuarto. Cuando llegó no hacía nada de relajo. Al pasar el tiempo, iba cambiando. Despues era uno de los mas relajeros de la unidad.

Por eso algunas personas cuando no los castigan, se vuelven más peores.

Una vez mi papa me castigo fuerte porque me había portado mal. Le pregunte a mi papa si me queria porque me pegaba y me respondió, "porque una vara de pequeña se endereza, pero cuando crece, no se puede enderezar.

**From The Beat:** ¿Es esto como un castigo para ti? ¿Qué cree que quiso decir con esa frase? ¿Crees que para la próxima vez, nos puedes el sentido de esta frase con mas detayes?

## My Punishment

I think punishments are good because they make us change. In some cases, punishments could be worst.

I was with a roommate who was locked up in the same room. When he came, he wouldn't make any trouble. After a time, he became to change. Later, he was one of the trouble makers from the unit.

That's why some people get worse if they don't get punishments.

One time my dad punished me really hard because I misbehaved. I asked my dad why would he hit me if he loved me, and he responded, "a tree can be unbent when being little, but when it's big, you can unbend it."

**-Juan, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Is this like a punishment for you? What do you think he meant with the phrase? Do you think you would write the meaning of this phrase in details?

## El Primer Paso Es Arrepentirse

Que tranza carnales? Espero que no les falte para salir, y que esten haciendo bien aquí en la torcida. Pues, aquí escribo algo de lo que pienso en estos momentos.

Esta es una de esas veces que me agarran y solo tengo 18 año. Dos veces he estado en la juvenil y dos veces he estado en la cárcel de Milpitas, CA para adultos por que les decía a los policías que tenía 19 años cuando solo tenía 16.

Pienso que esta es la última oportunidad que me dan porque a lo mejor voy a ser deportado a México. En estos momentos, me faltan 2 meses y medio para salir.

Estoy en una cárcel de juvenil y tengo un 50% de posibilidades de salir deportado y el otro 50% de salir aquí en San José.

El punto es el siguiente: en esta ocasión si me arrepiento de todo corazón y ahora si estoy apunto de perder todo lo poco que tengo hasta lo más importante que es mi familia. Pero le estoy pidiendo mucho a Dios para que todo salga bien. Me despido, su camarada Niño.

**From The Beat:** Lucha por no perderlo todo. Todavía estas a tiempo para poder recuperar todo lo que has perdido. Nosotros conocemos a muchos quienes han perdido mucho y han logrado recuperarlo con todo su esfuerzo. Si te dan otra oportunidad, no la riegues. Usala para tu mejor conveniencia.

## My First Step Is To Regret

What's up brothers? I hope you don't have much time here to leave and to do well in jail. Well, here I am writing something I have in mind at this moment.

This is one of those times they caught me and I am only 18 years old. I've been in juvenile hall twice and another two times in Milpitas County because I lied to the police that I was 19 years old when I was only 16 years old.

I think this is the last chance I have because I may get deported back to Mexico. At this moment, I have two months and a half left to get out.

I am in a jail for juveniles and I have 50% of possibilities to be deported and another 50% to get out in San Jose.

My point is the next one: in this occasion I do regret it with all my heart and now I am very close to loose all I have, even the most important that is my family. But I am asking God to help me get out. My greetings, your friend Niño.

**-José, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Fight not to lose it all. You're still have time to get back what you've lost. We know many young people who lost many things and have gotten back what they lost with all their efforts. If you get another chance to stay, don't mess it up. Use it for your convinience!

## Mi Vida En La Juvenil

Mi nombre es Irvin y hace 15 días me trajeron aquí. Estoy muy triste por mi madre porque ella siempre me ha aconsejado y ahora me arrepiento.

Ojalá que pronto pueda salir de aquí para ayudar a mi jefita, y a mi padre. Espero que esto les ayude a reflexionar para que cuiden a sus jefas.

Arriba El Salvador y a toda la raza Latina.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que esta experienia te ayude a escuchar a los que realmete quiere lo mejor para ti. ¿Crees que puedas?

## My Life In Juvenile Hall

My name is Irvin and 15 days ago, they brought me here. I am sad over my mother because she has always advised me and now I regret it.

I hope I can get out soon from here and be able to help my mother and father. I hope this also help you reflect to take care of your parents.

Long live El Salvador and my Latinos!

**-Irvin, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope this experience helps you to listen to those who really loves you and want the best for you. Can you?

## Todo Comenzó...

Todo comenzó cuando yo era muy joven. Empece a fumar mota y luego cigarros y por último la bebida. Pero eso sí que nunca lo hice adelante de mi madre.

Despues me vine para US. Aqui empece a agarrar más vicios y ya no le hablaba a nadie. Llego un tiempo que me aburri de la vida que llebaba y empece a pensar con la cabeza. Me arrepenti de todo.

**From The Beat:** ¿Ahora que sigue siguiente? ¿Seguiras en lo mismo o no? ¿O tomaras otro rumbo más. ¡Has lo mejor para ti!

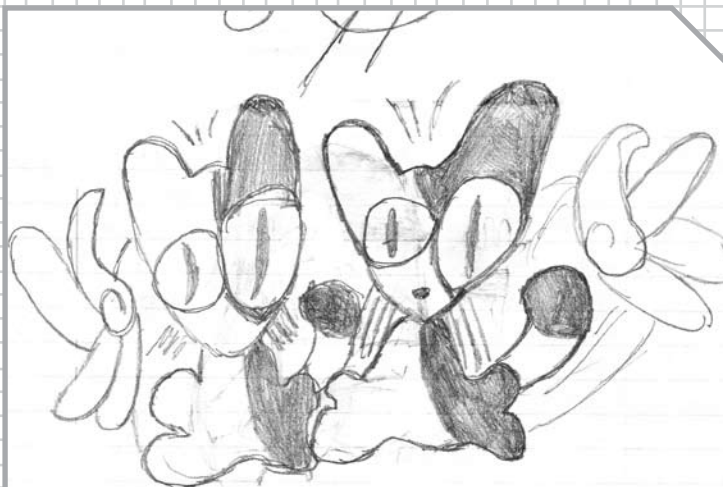
## Everything Started...

Everything started when I was very young. I started smoking weed, then cigarettes, and drinking. Oh, I never did it in front of my mother though.

Later, I came to the US. I started to get more bad habits here and I wouldn't even call anyone. There was a time when I got tired of the life I was living and I started thinking with my head. I regret it all.

**-Chamuco, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What's next? Are you going to continue doing the same? Or are you going to take another way? Do what's best for you!



## Lo Que Quiero

Yo les voy a contra mis sueños. Mis sueño es superar algo que me paso hace muchos tiempo. Yo fui violado por mi padraastro cuando era un solo niño.

Mi sueño es ser normal como los demás que tienen novia y son felices.

**From The Beat:** ¡Y lo serás! Sentimos mucho lo que te pasó. Odiamos a lo que hacen estos tipos de cosas horrible. Si estas teniendo dificultades en evitar en pensar sobre este acto tan horrible, deberias de buscar la forma buscar terapia para que te ayuden sicológicamente. ¿Quien dice que no eres normal? Ayuda mucho.

## What I Want

I'm going to share about my dreams. My dream is to over come something that happened many years ago. I was raped by my step-dad a long time ago when I was just a kid.

My dream is to be normal like others who have their girlfriends and are happy.

**-Sebastian, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** And you will be happy one day! We are sorry for what happened. We hate people who do such as horrible things like this. If you are having difficulties in avoiding thinking about this issue, you should get professional help that can help you psychologically. It helps a lot.

## Este Es Un Castigo De Dios

Yo creo que Dios me ha castigado por todas las cosas malas que le he hecho a mi madre y a las personas que en realidad me quieren.

Yo antes era una buena persona, que se preocupaba por las demás gente. Desde que conocí a mis amigos, todo cambió. Empece a usar drogas, a salirme de le escuela, y ya no me importaba nada.

Ahora que estoy aqui, siento que es el peor castigo que Dios me pudo dar. Quiero cambiar mi vida porque yo sé que con la vida que llebo, no voya llegar a ningún lado.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que llegues a cambiar tu vida. La verdad es que la vida que llebas, no te llebará a nada, así como dijistes. ¿Cuales son tus planes? Es hora que recuperes la vida que llebabas antes de venir a este lugar.

## This Is A Punishme From God

I think God has punished me for all the things that I have done wrong to my mother and to the people who really cares for me.

Before I was a good person, who would care for other people. Ever since I met my friends, everything changed. I started to use drugs, quit school and didn't care about anything.

Now that I am here, I feel this is the worse punishment God could give me. I want to change my life because I know I won't nowhere with the life I have.

**-Nancy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope you change your life. Like you said, the life you are living won't take you anywhere. What are your plans? It's time for you to get back at the life you had before.

## Los Castigos

Bueno, mi nombre es Daniel y soy de Honduras. Creo que uno tiene varios castigos, pero unos castigos son más duros que otros.

Estoy aqui por arrestos de drogas y me parece que al estar aqui si es castigo.

Creo que hay castigos mas grande porque aqui estamos bien, pero he escuchado que en las prisiones es todo diferente. Dicen que allá te matan, que te violan y de todo lo peor.

Me aferra y me pone a pensar que ahorita estoy en el punto de pensar bien las coas y tratare de hacer las cosas mejor.

**From The Beat:** Esos lugares son los que deberias muy seriamente de evitar. Allá es peor. Si no te sabes defender, puedes llegar ser violado o matado. O sea, que lo que te han dicho es cierto. ¿Te gustaria ir alguna vez ahí?

## Punishments

Well, my name is Daniel and I am from Honduras. I think one deserve a few punishment, but there are others punishments that are harder.

Here I am for drugs arrests and it seems that this is like a punishment for me.

I think there are others big punishment and we are fine in here. But I have heard that in prisons the punishments are different. People say that there you can get killed, raped and the worst of all it could happen to you.

It scares me and it makes me think that I am in the moment to think about things and try to do things right.

**-Daniel, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Those are the places you should strongly avoid. Those are the worst that here. If you can't defend yourself there, you can get hurt, raped and killed like you said. So, what you are heard is true. Would like to go there?



## Knowledge is Power

One of the favorite F. Dostoevsky quotes is that “The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its’ prisons”. I have never, however, heard anyone quote another saying of this Russian novelist, that “Lying to ourselves is more deeply ingrained than lying to others.” And so, before we take the temperature of prison conditions and begin pointing fingers at “those responsible” for every social malady, it would help to realize that the bulging prison populations are a mere reflection of what is valued in our society.

For instance, how is success measured and qualified? Is it not by status of wealth? Don’t the business schools teach to “get ahead” (so what if you step on someone, while elbowing your way to the front of the pack!), to be “aggressive in competitive market”? Aren’t “profits and growth” the ultimate goal of the modern economy? It’s all about “you”, even at the expense of others, and when all of these values of “consumers” and “producers” (no longer people, mind you, but faceless entities who simply gobble up whatever is sold at the market) trickle down to the streets and areas where legal opportunities are lacking or none-existent. What is one to expect?

Supposedly, we live in the most literate, most advanced, most sophisticated society to ever adorn the face of the earth. Granted. So then how is it that 1 in a 100 adults in a society with platinum pedigree is basically a “social reject” – imprisoned, locked away with little chance of redemption and rehabilitation? This is disturbing. With our squadrons of psychologists and scientists, with all of this technological advancement and unparalleled knowledge, haven’t we figured out how to fix people?

Apparently not, because the prison systems aren’t shrinking; on the contrary, they are expanding, and are slowly melting into a gigantic psychiatric complex. We live in medicated society, in a mechanical world, where the answer to the question “what does it mean to be human?” is constantly revised, redefined, and reflective of what is socially acceptable.

What happens to the people who are thrown away, who get a bad start and don’t recover? What happens to the uneducated, to the “socially-inferior”, but who are no less human than anyone else? Who redeems the broken people, who goes after the castaways? Who ministers to the young people with life sentences—to the young people whom society has deemed as “unredeemable”, broken merchandise, by that very life term?

Who? God does, and he does it through His Church.

Yes, I realized this is a double-edged sword, and perhaps some of the readers have been hurt by those who were supposed to help them. Well, that also is our human failure, which further testifies to the difficulty of being authentic in a world filled with false glitter. Here I lean on personal experience: I, a lifer and a murderer, who himself was sentenced to LWOP(Life With Out Parole) while still a teenager, has been redeemed by God, and adopted in a local parish, in Fresno, where the priest vouched for me and another lifer before an entire congregation, composed of people from all walks of life.

Our next writer is writing to us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, California. He’s been a long time writer and friend of ours. He doesn’t need much of an introduction, as a lot of you who have been reading our publication on a weekly basis know that Mikhail has been dropping constant knowledge for all the readers out there. Mikhail is a very important and intellectual and spiritually induced writer, which we are honored to have in our pages. With that said, enjoy his latest effort, it has plenty of power.

Let’s understand something here: we are not “profitable” in an economic sense. We are a burden; social rejects who have made awful choices and wasted tremendous opportunities while in the free world. And yet, we have been accepted, adopted, and helped by an “establishment” (this very church) that is in society, but not of it.

My highest educational achievement is a GED---received in a youth facility, when I was 17. But the greatest knowledge I’ve obtained is the education of love—of being loved not for myself, but in spite of myself. This is what I hope to spend the rest of my life in prison in learning and acquiring: how to love God who loved me first, and how to love and serve those around me, just as I’m loved by my spiritual father and the Church.

True knowledge is more than facts and head knowledge. I’ve heard it said that a puffed up head with an unchanged heart makes only a clever devil. True knowledge is about being truly human in relation to God and others—living with the conscious grasp that we’re more than a random collection of DNA and molecules that somehow slipped through natural selection.

What are we doing on earth? How we got here and where are we headed? These are the important questions for each of us. After all, in the words of Einstein, “true education is what remains after you have forgotten everything you learned.”

God bless!



## When My Bunk Is A Bed

There are some times  
 When my bunk is a bed.  
 I lay in it

And it is comfortable.  
 My hands meet behind my head  
 My smile  
 Re-introduces itself to the world  
 My eyes lazily drift shut,  
 Blackening the backdrop  
 Of my mind,  
 And I daydream.

And there are times  
 When I daydream  
 And I see myself not  
 As a prisoner,  
 As a terror,  
 As a victim...  
 And it bewilders me  
 For without these things  
 I am only loved  
 Yet, these things are  
 And love is all I have.

Like literature's greatest poets, Michael Cabral always surprises us by challenging himself — and, by extension, all of us — by looking honestly at himself and his situation and never relying on empty clichés and preconceptions. Here he writes, "The world is cold/ But I am not," which is not just true, it is a restrained understatement. This brilliant writer is as passionate as any we've ever featured in these pages, and — despite the cold reality of his Salinas Valley State prison cell — we are always warmed by his words and his heart.

There are some times  
 When my blankets are a friendship.  
 I wrap myself up in them  
 And I feel good  
 About choices I have made.  
 The world is cold  
 But I am not.  
 I savoringly inhale deeply  
 Just once  
 And accept this embrace...  
 Release the breath, I escape into  
 something real.

And there are times  
 When real is on my side  
 And I consider  
 All that time has offered me  
 And I think  
 How lucky I am,  
 How lucky I am to be here

There are some times  
 When my pillow is a lover  
 I am kissed on my cheek  
 And the moment  
 Grows into our own.  
 I am pulled in close,  
 My arms fold around it  
 In a "never let me go" plea...  
 My tears are dried  
 And I am not alone.

And there are times  
 When alone is no more  
 And I think about the future —  
 My bed,  
 My friends,  
 My love,  
 My life...  
 I have longed for this  
 From the beginning of time...

## ROBERT J. ROSS

## To All My Youth

Hello, my name is Robert and I would like to borrow a little of your time — not to preach, but to tell you a little bit about myself. Hopefully, it can help you along your path — no matter where it shall lead.

Like a lot of people I grew up in a state of poverty. The first house I lived in was literally leaning. No A/C, no heat, and no insulation. There was a back room with a hole in the floor and an eight foot drop into dirt. As a little boy, I witnessed my parents fighting all the time — mainly, my father hitting my mother. My older brother was going back and forth to jail. Now, he's in prison in Alabama.

Once we moved from that house, things got a little better. Time went on and I graduated from High School and left for the Army. I was an aviation mechanic and I worked on three types of helicopters... I even learned to fly one. I was making rank fast and I even got recruited into a Special Forces unit. Of course, I never made it to that unit because of a poor choice I made.

Back in 2001, my father developed throat cancer and couldn't work. My mother is a diabetic and was on dialysis. Of course, the bills were behind and they were being threatened with eviction. My marriage was crumbling. Along with my fifty-three-mile drive to work, I had to work twelve hour shifts, seven days a week. It was exhausting, not only to me, but my wife who was taking care of our baby boy all day. When our son was just nine months old, my wife decided she'd had enough and she left.

My son took a nap on my chest with me on the couch just before they left. As I was strapping him into the car, I vividly remember how he looked at me — like he knew what was going on. As if to say "You're just gonna let me go?" This image haunts me still. Two days later, I robbed a bank. I felt I still had to help my family, and at that point, I had nothing to lose. I got away with over \$100K for a short time. Not even enough time to help my family.

Over some months, I wound up taking a deal for fifteen years and four months with two strikes — and this is my first arrest. I started on a level four yard and I've made it down to

Our next writer is writing to us from a Correctional Facility in Norco, Ca. He's a special individual with a lot of knack for giving advice. He's made mistakes before but has realized that only he has the power to take control and make the changes in his life. Just like all of you. He's not trying to preach but just trying to get all you readers out there to really take a look at yourselves and what you want to do in life. Because all it takes is heart and determination and you can do whatever you want to do! So without any further delay listen up some of Robert's real talk!

this level two. I've seen a lot of disturbing things along the way and I will never forget them. I remember riots, deaths, and a lot of knife play. I remember someone getting stabbed on Christmas night and I wish, with all I have, that I could forget these things.

On top of all this, I've been divorced, my old friends are M.I.A. and what destroys me is the fact that my son calls someone else "Daddy". I haven't had a visit in seven years because I'm just too far away from home. I'm alone in this state but I won't let it hold me down. I've realized that my family still loves me and will always have my back as yours will. Someday, I will see my son again and I'll get a chance to explain myself to him. I'll be able hug him, kiss him, and tell him how much I love him.

I want you to see that no matter what you go through — you can get through it. And that goes for all of you. Whatever you believe in. Keep believing in it. Don't lose your faith. Learn who you are. All of us have a God-given talent. We just have to search for it sometimes. Look for it and use it to help you along your way. And who knows, it could get you millions — if not more!

This is no place to spend any of your time, especially, if you already know. But if some of you have no choice but to come and our paths shall cross, I promise that I'll teach you how to fish. I'll do what I can to help you discover "you" and become the best "you" possible. There's not one of you reading this who can't do what they wish, and become what they want. All of you are great individuals. It's on you to show just how great you truly are.

Sincerely rooting for you...

## Don't Play Yourself

Here they come, twenty thousand of them. That is how many federal inmates are expected to have their time significantly reduced by the new Crack law. Factor in the Second Chance Act signed into effect by President Bush last month and the possibility of parole being reinstated and that number could easily be doubled.

That means that over the next few years, individuals who were counted out as lost causes to the system will be given another opportunity at freedom. In other words, that man or woman you didn't think that you would see again for 10 or 20 years, he or she could be knocking on your door tomorrow.

But before you begin preparing for the coming home celebrations, you may not to consider whether or not your presence is welcome. Sure, you and this person were close before he or she left the streets. But how real you have you kept it with them since?

That brother, sister, son, daughter, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, cousin or best friend you haven't been in touch with in years, how do you rally believe they'll receive you? Those two or three thousand days they didn't hear from you, they remember every minute

Behind the joy and excitement they're experiencing through the realization of exiting prison earlier than they anticipated, exists a lump of bitterness. Most of it is the left over residue from the contempt they felt for those they believed left them for dead.

Imagine for a minute risking your life and freedom to provide a better life for your loved one. Now think about how you would feel if those same individuals turned their backs on you when you were at your lowest point.

Picture, if you can, a scenario where you go without seeing you children for years at a time because the mother or father is too lazy or unconcerned about the bond you have with your seed. How would you handle having a wife or girlfriend blows your life savings, leaving you for your best friend or worse, your enemy?

I won't even go into detail about the countless number of associates who didn't think twice after you received your sentence. But, who you know will be right back in your face when you hit the city limits. Try to place yourself in this position. How much pleasant conversation would you have for certain people when you arrived home?

For the most part, a majority of the men and women preparing for their new life already have their mind set on who they will or will not deal with when they touch down. If you already know that you didn't support that friend or family member while they were away, don't play yourself by thinking that everything is cool. If they want you back in their life again, they'll let you know. If not, don't force the issue. Save some self-respect and just keep it moving.

## Friendship That Lasts a Lifetime

Dedicated to Michael Jerome McKinney

Friendship that lasts a lifetime  
Is one that will give and take  
It's built on truth and honesty  
And offers a firm handshake  
A friend will stand beside you  
When others turn away  
If distance separates for a season  
In your heart they'll forever stay  
When burdens are heavy to carry  
A friend will stretch out a hand  
Obstacles that you couldn't overcome  
With a friend's help you often can  
Friendship that lasts a lifetime  
Can keep secrets that were told  
For it's about loyalty and kindness  
And shines forth as pure as gold  
Friendship that lasts a lifetime  
Is built on love and trust and care  
It's a bridge that's easy to cross over  
If made for both to share  
Your brother in struggle.

Our next writer is no stranger to our publication. He's writing from a Union Correctional Facility in Raiford, Florida. AS many of you regulars no, Shawn constantly delivers writing with hopes on educating everyone that's reading. Shawn never seems to stop impressing us as he always delivers pieces on various topics. Please read folks because he's really delivering some knowledge and it won't hurt to soak some up.

## Protected

Dedicated to Senior Psychologist M. Leafgreen  
I am a creation of God, blessed by God in every moment. Even when circumstances seem troubling, I know that God's presence is my wisdom and strength. Whatever I face, whatever experiences I may need to learn from, I look to the presence of God for the assurance of the best outcome for me and for everyone.

I deepen my awareness of God in regular prayer times, affirming God's presence; I release any specific concerns and wait in the silence.

Each passing moment brings me a deeper realization of the truth: I am a creation of God, blessed by God in every moment.

Thinking of and praying for family, friends, or others, I remember that each one is created by God, infrared with and surrounded by God's spirit. Releasing all feelings of anxiety, I resonate with the understanding that with God, all is well. We are creations of God, blessed by God in every moment.

## Celebrating Black Music Month

African Americans can take great pride in the accomplishments of our ancestors. Although they were oppressed, they still gave much to the land of their oppressors. As a result, their contributions can be observed in all aspects of American life.

Most people are aware that February is recognized as Black History Month, but not as many realize that the month of June is recognized as "Black Music Month".

Throughout the history, music has been the form of storytelling for many cultures throughout the world. People have sung about their joys, hopes, and aspirations. Their sadness, disappointments, and heartbreaks also evolved into lyrics accompanied by music.

During the slavery era, African American used music deliver messages to runaways, such as "Wade In The Water," which directed to slaves to the river to avoid pursuers.

Thomas Dorsey wrote the lyrics to "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," in response to the death of his wife and child. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the lyrics to the gospel song "We Shall Overcome" as the theme song during the Civil Rights movement, and, the song, Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," by James Weldon Johnson, became the Black National Anthem.

Black music has also been used to express the emotions ranging from love to faith as it took the forms of gospel, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, country and western, hip-hop, and rap. Through Black music the names of such artists as the Clark Sisters, Rev. James Cleveland, Rance Allen, Shirley Caesar, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Luther Vandross, Barry White, The Fugees, Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, P. Diddy, Whitney Houston, Ginuwine, Tameka, B.B. King, Bobby Womack, Al Green, Patty La Bell, Betty Wright, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, and numerous others have become household words. And music is something that can be celebrated without any special preparations. All you have to do is listen.



## Drugs

Growing up in Tampa, Fla, I've seen the destructiveness of drugs and how it has affected virtually every Black family in my community. Almost everybody I know, including myself, has either an uncle, brother, sister, mother, father, or distant cousin strung out on crack or heroin, whether they want to admit it or not, because the facts are there in black and white. The drug problem in Black America is real and becoming more of a cancer to our society with each passing day. If something is not done soon, the future of our race is in serious jeopardy.

The ones that suffer the most from this epidemic are the offspring of addicted parents. Improper parenting and an environment of social dysfunction render most of these children powerless and ignorant to their true potential to achieve success in life. That is why today we see the corners of our inner cities filled with young Black men peddling death to one another instead of working toward a more progressive and productive future to themselves and their community.

Instead of being the next generation of great thinkers and businessmen, they are on a course to become long-term residents of our nation's jails and penitentiaries. I have years as a drug dealer in the drugs and addictions field, dealing with a wide of people struggling with chemical issues. I've seen how devastating addiction can be not only for the drug user, but also the individual's entire family. I've seen how devastating addiction can be not only for the drug user, but also the individual's entire family. I've seen mothers who have been selling their child to drug dealers for a ten-dollar crack rock, grown men who have prostituting themselves on the streets for their next fix of heroin. I've seen public figures and how drugs have destroyed their character and standing in the community.

The one common thread that comes to mind with all of this insanity is that drug abuse will lead all of its affected individuals, no matter what their social or financial status, down one similar path. The path is one of humiliation, degradation, a loss of self-respect and self-worth, and nothing but a colossal waste of a human existence.

My last statement is not to suggest that a drug addict's life has no value, because it does. I'm suggesting that until the individual begins to believe within himself that the infinite value and limitless potential, his time on this earth will have been nothing more than a waste of his God-given talent. I don't believe that any of us was created to become addicted to a substance, but I do believe that some of us, utilizing our God-given right of free will and choice, made the unwise decision to indulge in drugs even after having some knowledge of its

negative effects.

My argument is that the same free will that was exercised to take that first blast is the same free will that the addict must recapture to become whole once again. This is not an impossible task because I've witnessed firsthand many success people. The struggles of many Black men in our society today who at some time or another in their lives have allowed themselves to be sucked into the false dreams and promises offered by the world of drugs and crime.

I've known many Black men who go home from prison determined to change but, due to unforeseen circumstances, find themselves engaging in the wrong things (i.e. criminal behavior) for all of the reasons. The thug mentality that is persuasive in Black male youth today has been passed down from generation within our community. Sadly, the drug culture and all that it entails has become a rite of passage of sorts for many young Black men who feel empowered by the fast money and the allure of notoriety associated with being a drug dealer.

After reading this, I hope that The Beat Within readers can take away several valuable lessons. First of all, for those who have no understanding of the multiple dynamics of drug addiction, it is my sincerest intention to have opened your eyes to seeing that happens to weak people incapable of just saying no to their drug of choice. Second of all, I pray that more Black men become accountable in their actions and decide for themselves that the street life is a dead-end road offering nothing but a surely catastrophic demise for anyone who chooses to indulge in such illicit activities. I hope that many more of my brothers who may be struggling with the same issues that led many of them into seek a self-identity out in the streets, so that it may possibly dissuade him from falling into the same pitfalls as the hundreds of thousands of Black men now incarcerated across the nation.

Finally, for all of those individuals at war with themselves and their powerlessness over their drug of choice (heroin, cocaine, marijuana, etc), I hope that you find a source of inspiration. Please don't believe that drug addiction is a death sentence from which there is no escape. Know that once you have it in your mind to stop using drugs and disrespecting yourself, you'll find that there will be many people that will come into your life offering assistance in your journey. However, you must be just as diligent, persistent, and dedicated to staying clean as you were to getting high. Sobriety is a way of life that promises prosperity, but continuing to use will guarantee you nothing but pure hell for the rest of your days on Earth. Make the smart choice and make a change in your life! Last of a dying breed.

## The Devil's Workshop

This may come as a shock to some people, but school is out. This means that many children will be idle for the summer. You have to find something for these children to do. Let us not forget that idle minds are the devils workshop.

So many people will have to work. This will mean that children will be left at home to fend for themselves. Many schools will be sponsoring summer school sessions. Parents should try to get their children into these summer programs can keep them out of trouble, provide some supervision and provide some educational experiences.

The Boys and Girls is a second option. Especially for those parents who can afford the fee to attend a club. The Boys and Girls is known for its educational and recreational programs.

The City Parks and Recreation program is a third option. Many playgrounds are well organized and provide entertaining and productive activities for children. These programs are free. Then there is the opportunity to get a job. Many of these children are old enough to get a job.

Jobs can be a learning experience and more importantly provide spending money to buy school clothes and even money to help out around the house. For qualified families with young children there are the daycare and pre-kindergarten programs for children.

Finally there are volunteer programs where young people can provide supervised services to charitable organizations and people who need various kind of help. Parents it is not too late. Get your child involved in a constructed supervised program.

You cannot leave them at home alone with nothing to do and you cannot allow them to idly run the streets all day and half of the night. When this occurs, good children often wind up in trouble. The county's criminal population is large enough. We don't need young children adding to that number. Two months is a long time for children with nothing to do. Parents need to find something for their children to do. If you don't know, call the school district, all the city of the county, call the Boys and Girls Club, call your church, call your friends, look at The Beat Within but find your child something to do.

## Family

My name is Dopey and I've been locked up for 23 months I got locked up for assault with a firearm and robbery when I was 12. My mom abandoned me from 12 to 16. I've been on my own living on the streets and living in agony. My family were all drug addicts and none of them took me in. But it's ok everything happens for a reason.

Since I've been locked up I've been to ten different camps and Kirby, which is a lockdown placement, but I still consider that being locked down. But my life was not getting better it was getting worse, until I met a girl named Fantasia. She looked at me different than everybody else.

She cared for me and started to love me and I loved her as well too, so then we ended up hooking up and she became my girlfriend, since I have no family she became my family too.

Hey Beat this one goes out to all the young few who don't believe in appreciation. Thank you.

**-Dopey**

## God or The Hood

My life's been hell and it'll be worse when I die  
 But yet the pastor wonders why I choose to get high  
 Catholic but born in the ghetto

Faced with choices like checks or stilettos

Go to school or get paid

Go to church Sunday, Monday get caught up in a drug  
 raid

Bible or alibi

Blast back or it's your choice to die

Every night praying a thug's prayer

Then your homie dies and you wonder is Jesus really  
 there

Granny says everything will be all right

You get arrested the very next night

Now I believe in Heaven, but I'm living in sin

Therefore the question is

Will Heaven let me in?

**-Brandi S.**

Our next group of writers, are coming from L.A. Central Juvenile Hall. This is their first time writing for The Beat Within. Mind you we flew down to L.A and conducted a workshop awhile back, and have been struggling to get a weekly program up and running ever since. This go round, our good friend, Michael Arrington, send us the latest from several young people... So everybody pay attention and listen to the struggles and lifestyles these young writers are going through. We all are going through our fair share of battles in life. Thanks again to Michael and the young writers for stepping up! We hope to hear from you all very soon.

## What's Up

Hi my name is Michael G. let me tell you something bout myself. I've been in Central Juvenile Hall in and out. I been in Central since I was 12 years old, when I got busted for a 187 (murder). I was fighting my case for months. My judge told me that I was looking at years at CYA.

Well my dad got me a lawyer and I won my case. They gave me six months placement. Well when I first got to placement I ran away. I went to the hood. I been gangbanging since I was 12 years old.

Well I am 17 years old right now. I've been locked up for fiveyears in and out of Central Juvenile Hall.

**-Payaso**

## Life

Trapped in the system

No one to miss them

Infants, children, teens

No one to heal them

Kids without their mothers

What about the father

Mother and daughter

More like the cow the butcher slaughtered

Found a new hobby

Selling your body

Lost my big brother

I blamed my mother

Lover and friend

I had his back 'till the end

One last look is all it took

To fill my life with grief.

**-Carmen R.**

## Long Road

It's been so long since I've written The Beat  
 I used to be a juvenile writing to you in my assigned seat  
 I did my time in Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall  
 Now I'm 21 writing in these prison walls

I used to confide to The Beat my passion for freedom

Grew up in and out of this system

I climbed the latter to the top

But found out it only caused my life to slip

I used to sit with my family every chance I had

And talk to them

Seems now I've become a burden to all of them

Like something a couple of year terms!

I found out the hard way, always blaming everyone else

I never thought about what they must of felt!

Can't say its been fun, looking out your cell block facing all this time

Rather than that, I wish my words could spare or save a life

This is a poem that I wish the younger generation to heed

For a poem to have such feeling like I have it isn't right

It's sorrow for my mistakes, take my advice young ones

It's the truth out there and in here.

## JUSTIN SENNERT

Our next writer is writing to us from a Correctional Facility in Sacramento, Ca. He's not new to The Beat Within magazine as he's familiar with us through his juvenile hall days in Santa Clara County. Justin has had his fair share of struggles in his life and he's not afraid to admitting to any of the mistakes he's made. Justin would like to share his journey with all you readers out there and hope to inspire some of y'all to change before you end up somewhere you don't wanna be in.

## To The Beat

Hey it's been a while since I seen any of your work. I used to enjoy you coming to the juvenile hall back in San Jose! That was like 3-4 years ago and you guys/girls helped me do my time and express myself! Sorry to say, I'm 21 now and writing my sentence! But how can I get a hold of some weekly publishes? I mean, I'll put some, if not everything I can to you all down there for the juvenile's behind the walls! I would like to add this poem for The Beat within! Well until next time, up most respect.

## I Miss You All

I miss you mother  
I miss you my brother  
I miss you my sister  
I miss you so much  
I wish for us to stay in  
touch  
I been away from you all for  
to many years  
I can not count all my  
wasted tears  
At night I cry at times with  
you all on my mind  
Even though I am not there  
I feel you all pains because  
in my heart I know you all  
care  
And I know how much you  
all need me there  
But my Anger

And foolish actions  
Has kept me locked away  
And I miss you all  
Each and every day  
We are one family that was  
brought together by the  
hands of God  
And it should always stay  
that way  
But for many reasons it is  
not that way  
Our family has been  
departed my the prison  
system  
And I miss you all so much  
When I was growing up we  
spent so many good and bad  
times together  
And I miss them times just  
as much as I miss you all.

Our next writer is writing from Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida. Michael is another writer from Florida that consistently drops pieces with a lot of knowledge trying to teach all the readers out there a thing or two about life, from where he sits. 'Cause life is what we make of it, just like our friend McKinney tells us. And it's true too! Life is as hard as it is and we all have the choice to make it better for us, or worse. So marinate on your bunk, or wherever you're sitting, and read some game from the O.G. residing in UCI!

## Life Is What You Make It

Life is what we make it. Life is what we take away from it. If we make our bed in life hard, then that's the bed of life we have to lay in. If we make the bed of life easy then life would be easy for us. So it's no reason to cry about all the things we go through in life because our life is determined by what we make out of it. So what we put in life is what we get out of it.

## My Life Is At A Crossroad

I have not had an easy life. Things have been rough for me. For so many years my mind has always been troubled. My life has always been troubled being very undecided in which way to go. I had many good intentions. I had a strong will to be better and to do better and when I was much younger in my head I wanted to do good. I loved my father big Mike, and I look up to big Mike. But some where in the back of my young mind I did not want to follow in the foot steps of my father Big Mike because he up in prison at a very young age up in the state of Alabama. And he did somewhat a long number of years in prison.

Big Mike had a bad temper and big mike was full of anger and loved to fight. I never spent a long time together with my father. I love my father big Mike a.k.a. chief crazy horse but I did not want to follow in my father big Mike foot because I knew he lived a troubled life. But he had love for his only two sons. He had a lot of hate in is heart for white people. And I was too young to try and understand why my father had a dislike for white people. And in my young heart wanted to have love for all because I have met some good white people.

And after going through all I have been through, at the age of 37 years, I struggle to reach that turning point in my life. My life is at a crossroad. I want so bad to change and do away with the old Mike-Mike and become the leader I was set out to be. And at the crossroad some times I get caught up in not knowing which way to turn. My ego, some times gets too big for myself. But my heart wants to take that road that leads to the right way.

## Dictator Of My Own Actions

For so many years I was always trapped in to letting other dictate my action right here in prison. I was always trying to prove a point to others. I can what other may think of me. And every time I went out my way to prove a point to someone, by fighting or hurting someone. I was the one who had to suffer or pay the price for it. And they laugh at me. And call me a fool and a crash dummy.

They did not care about me like I should have been caring about myself. And the one's who was really my friends. They always shared some good insight with me, by telling me Mike, Mike, you don't have anything to prove through fighting, violence and hurting people about words and small stuff. And at that moment I use to feel where they be coming from. But sometimes my ego would get the best of my better judgment, and I go to feeling like I got a point to prove.

I only had something to prove to myself. And that was to be my own man. And do my own thinking. And dictate my own action and always trying to prove a point had really hurt my life in so many ways. Because every time I got into some trouble from trying to prove a point I end up getting locked up, I end up doing life in prison. And from all this I was struggling to learn how to be the dictator of my own action. Making the right choices.

## It's About Getting Back Up

In life I have taking so many great downfalls. Just like so many others in this world. But it's not all about how many times we fall because downfalls come along with the struggle. It's about being able to get back up and keep striving for betterment. It's not about worrying about if we are going to take a fall because if it was not for all the falling and stumbling I have done, I would have never made it this far in life right now today.

I always had a strong will to get back up. It was hard to keep a good man like myself down because God was on my side. And he was not going to let me stay down. And I was not going to let myself stay down. And I was not going to let my self stay down. It was only in my blood to get back up.

And I always prepared myself to fall, because the more we fall the more we can learn for each fall. And keep getting back up. Some of the world's greatest people have taken many downfalls. But what made them so great they always got right back up.

## God Promise For Me

God promise for me is so real  
God promise for me I can feel  
God promise for me is his will  
And nothing in this world could kill his promise for me  
God promise was made from the start  
God Knew my life was going to be hard  
God promise to bless my life to be filled with so many  
things  
God promise to be with me through all my pains  
God bless me to grow a brain  
God promise not to let me go insane  
And God promise for me has never fail  
And God made his promise at the day of my birth  
That he would let me go through many hardships  
He would put me in prison for a long number of years  
And God Knew with me being in prison would give more  
time then I needed  
To learn true knowledge about myself  
And to learn true knowledge about God and his Promise  
for me  
And that was to carry me through a prison life of  
hardships and pains  
But God was going to be with me trough it all  
Because all the hardship I was going through  
Was preparing me for the promise God had for me.



Our next writer is writing to us from the camp at Fort Stanton, New Mexico. He is a new writer for the magazine as he introduces himself and clearly tells us his feelings. Codi is an intelligent writer without fear of letting all you readers out there know what he's feeling. So give Codi a read people.

## This is my life

Part of it I don't like  
I don't know why but I got to deal with it  
Going through a lot of regret's  
Sometimes I just want to quit  
Forget about what I been through  
I was growing up like a dumb fool  
Not going to school or following the rules  
I thought I had my life planned out  
Every time I fell down I picked myself up  
I am weak but I got to stand on my own feet  
Or else I'll get defeat  
This isn't a win or lose life  
I just got to choose from wrong and right  
Life don't last very long  
My life is going away so I got to be strong and hold on  
I can't rewind my life to the past  
Life goes forward it can't go back  
Sometimes I act like I wasted my time  
Doing things that come to my mind  
Always in the dark where light doesn't shine  
I am lost but I want to be found  
Go back to the place I have frown on my face  
I been drinking and doing drugs  
Not even thinking about loved ones  
There at a place that I call home  
I got to face this crazy world alone  
How am I going to be a grown man?  
Stand up straight and use my own hand  
I got another chance to make a better plan  
I'll advance and succeed  
Because now's the time to be the best I can be  
I been through the pain and struggles  
I change from bad to good  
No more getting into trouble  
I'll remain this way as long as I could

## Faith

I got faith in my life  
From the day I was born till the day I die  
I will do anything just to survive  
Even if I have to sacrifice  
The reason I got faith is because of my family  
They were there for me  
When I was good or bad they still loved me  
No matter what I did  
My parents did their best to raise their kids  
That's real faith when they care about their family  
Love each of their kids equally  
Cause I got faith in my life  
I got faith in my life  
Now what does faith mean to me  
It means a lot to me  
That's why I put confidence in myself  
So I could live in my dream  
Faith is my number one theme  
It's the title of my life  
One day in the future  
Faith will give me some kids and wife  
Then maybe my life will be all right  
Cause I got faith in my life.

## Dear The Beat Within,

Hello my name is Cody, and I been locked up for a year and now I am on parole until July 10, 2008 so I wasn't able to go back home so I got to Cometo Camp here in New Mexico. The camp is called Camp Sierra Branca. It's not fun here but it's better than being locked up.

So I am writing you because I read your article and I know how the people feel about being locked up. It sucks and nobody likes it but then we all did it for a reason.

Maybe to learn a lesson out of it. So I pray for all the different races. And I am a Native American for the tribe called the Navajos. So I would want to write a poem that came from me. What life means to me...

## Lookin' Up

I looked up to people that were good and bad  
They were my role models that I had  
I watch them with my own eyes at what they did  
They taught me a lot of things when I was just a kid  
Some were positive  
Some were negative  
I followed their steps they took  
Every step I remember is in a book  
I tried to become one of my role models that I look up to  
But I couldn't cause all I wanted to be was me  
I have a dream of life, hope, pride, and happiness  
I have a nightmare of death, fear, anger, and sadness.

## Nightmare

When I sleep nightmares start to creep to my head  
I Get the chills and I don't want to go back to bed  
Last time I had a nightmare there was a demon  
And this is what it said  
"Your soul is mine! It is time to give it to me!"  
I woke up quick realizing it was only a dream  
The dream felt so real every time I close my eyes I get the chills  
Just thinking about the nightmare gets me scared  
I got to get some rest but my heart still beating fast in my chest  
So I closed my eyes to face my fears cause its for the best.

## Troublemaker

I was a troublemaker since the day that I was born  
I inform troubles get learned  
Starting trouble is the best thing I can do  
Getting people I knew into serious trouble  
No matter how big I get the bubble  
Single or double trouble it always gets bigger  
I am the troublemaker figure  
I always pull people's triggers just for fun  
When the trouble comes there's no where to run  
So come and follow the troublemaker around  
I make the smiles turn to frowns  
If you don't want to get into trouble stand your ground  
Lockdown all your negative thoughts  
I'll get you caught one way or the other.

## Life

Life is something we choose to do  
 Life was givin' to me and you  
 Life ain't no game  
 Life is full of different pains  
 Life what we need  
 Life can make us succeed  
 Life is better then death  
 Life gave us a chance of breath  
 Life gives me the smell, look, hear, touch, and taste  
 Life cannot be waste  
 Life is good not bad  
 Life is one shot that we have  
 Life is the truth not a lie  
 Life is like hello not bye  
 That is what life means to me

## Heart

Every single one of in this world got a heart  
 If we didn't have one how would we start?  
 Life is hard and seems to get harder  
 With our heart we get a little bit farther  
 At every beat of our heart just a waste  
 It's gone and it can't be replace  
 Our heart is the center of our lives  
 If our heart stop's pumping then we die  
 In our life we have to do our best  
 Our heart is beating all the time in our chest  
 Only if our heart could beat forever  
 Our heart puts our life together  
 Our heart lets us breath the fresh air  
 Our heart makes us want to love and care  
 Our heart came from the one true king  
 God was his name creator of all living thing  
 That's what my heart means to me  
 So we got to use our heart wisely.

## A Love Poem

I love and miss you baby  
 Just thinking of you makes me crazy  
 You're always in my dreams when I sleep  
 Everyday my love for you gets so deep  
 I'll keep you in my heart forever  
 Praying that we'll never split apart and just stick together  
 I'll be by you all the time, when you're in problems, trouble, and even bad weather  
 Whatever you're doing just remember the words I told you  
 "I LOVE MEAGAN" and that's true  
 Because what's the different between me and you  
 Our love is the same and that won't change  
 I can't wait till you change your last name  
 It'll be Becenti I guarantee  
 We'll live a happy life and be a family  
 I know that isn't what we expect  
 But with you and me we make perfect  
 When I let you into my life I thought it wasn't all right  
 Now I want you to be my wife if that's all right  
 It's up to you girl if you want to be with me or not  
 In this crazy world you're the only thing I got  
 Sorry if I ever made you sad  
 I can't go back and change what was bad  
 If I could, I would just for you  
 Cause babe that's how much I love you  
 That isn't a lie  
 I'll love you until the day I die  
 Baby you're my cutie pie  
 I'll be by your side and let our life go on  
 Your never alone with me so what can go wrong?  
 When your depress or in stress just remember this song  
 From January to December, 365 days every year, I'll always love you  
 This is the truth, here's the proof for you  
 "I LOVE YOU AND I KNOW YOU LOVE ME TOO!"

*How many thoughts went unexpected,  
 Because people lack the courage to fail...*

## To Fail Is To Succeed

What do I do with air like nails  
 Because the destiny of cruel intentions make it hard to breathe,  
 Walls that hold in the worst of all actions and foul manners  
 Roof and floor are so cold there is no heat  
 Fear is overwhelming  
 So invisible to some but with others it's not to be sought  
 Is there an escape?  
 Captions are beyond the worst nightmare,  
 Not even the craziest man should peek,  
 Ways to overcome the impossible  
 It's possible,  
 Let your thoughts sail,  
 How many thoughts went unexpected,  
 Because people lack the courage to fail...

## JUAN VALENCIA

Our next writer is writing to us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, CA. Juan was introduced to The Beat Within by various writers that contribute to The Beat Within, from within the same prison. He's a new writer as he delivers a powerful piece and a very unique point of view in his upcoming poem titled "To Fail Is To Succeed."

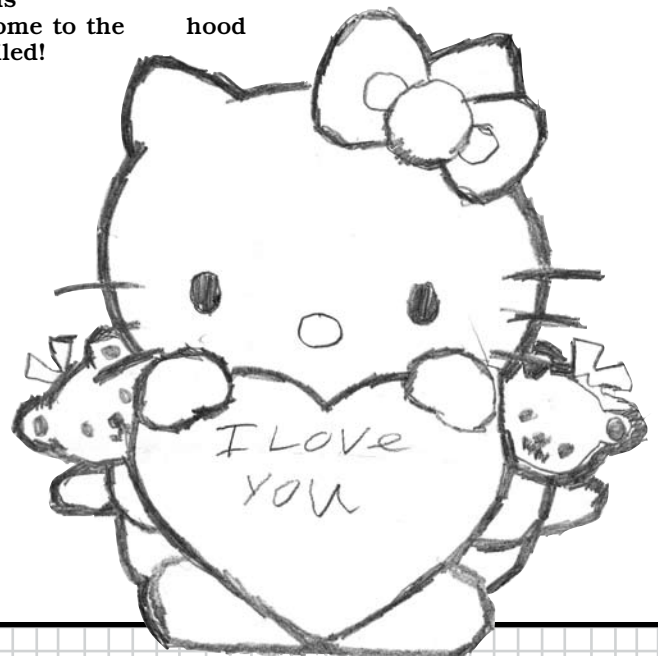


## Hood and Evil

Good consorts good and evil consorts evil  
And when hood and evil collide and the hood decides to  
abide by the evil  
Then the hood within it's municipal  
Finds itself perilous and may appear indefensible  
But the forces of evil are atypical  
And are only susceptible to those who yield to evil  
solicitations  
Reasons why we should distinguish hood reputation  
From hood misinterpretations  
Whereupon hood reputation was based and formed on  
solidarity  
That in which we found to be our sanctuary  
While hood misinterpretations are circumscribed by those  
environments Extending invitations  
To massive ruckus and deviations  
Since the beginning it's been readily conceivable  
That hood-like God- precedes evil  
The hood being purified and prestigious  
While evil continues upon the path of being iniquitous  
Keeping in mind the hood wasn't always a forum for  
controversy or filled with unscrupulous people  
Nearly every corner within the perimeter was a  
commercialization of being Black business owned  
Our introduction into pursuing becoming entrepreneurs  
A time when it was commonalty to obtain groceries or any  
other necessities on credit  
From the corner hood store  
No fixed interest rates or debit debates  
Everything you received was based upon your word no  
more  
Like hearing a friendly knock  
At the front or back door  
Neighbors borrowing or offering whatever they can afford  
When hustling was defined by conducting odd chores  
Appreciating the value behind working for yours  
These were the hood times when educating young minds,  
as to the significance behind  
Respecting and taking care of family was an act of  
maturity  
And celebrated by our elderly  
In their own dignified way  
By being the ones responsible for molding and shaping us,  
so charismatically  
Exemplifying such character, knowledge and wisdom for  
us to pass on to our progeny  
Seeing how they understood and foreseen the hood as just  
one big family  
Confident of the clarity in maintaining the hoods integrity  
Oppose to the peril of evil having longevity  
Through the implementations of the methodologies of  
those who fervently Prey upon the hoods fallibilities  
By enforcing their evil/wicked ways  
Using monetary escapades to monopolize the hoods'  
independent businesses-setting partitions- in an effort to  
revolutionize hood culture and religions  
Setting up liquor stores on the most frequently occupied  
corners  
Implanting those newfound hood informers  
As peddlers and users of dope hardcore  
Distributed by deputized hood drug lords  
A purposive means of diminishing our prospects of  
becoming entrepreneurs  
While inducing such habits we should deplore

Our next writer is writing to us from a Correctional Facility in Somerset, Pennsylvania. Darnell is an exceptional writer that loves to give his input on life and how to make it easier for all of us. He respects the work that we do and we as well respect his work and the messages he's trying to get across for all the readers out there, both young and old. We apologize Darnell, things might have got lost in the mail, but we got you in The Beat! So listen up to the upcoming poems that Darnell wrote for the world to hear!

Such acts that cause us to shamefully degrade and  
identify our beloved women as whores  
Something truly unbecoming  
Of what hood mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts and  
nieces stood for  
Today we're no longer accustomed to friendly knocks at  
the door  
Seeing neighbors as family nowadays  
No more- most neighbors are enemies with no idea as to  
why or what for  
Truly an underscore  
Now we've become increasingly accustomed  
To not so friendly knocks at the door  
Instead, the sounds of cops and hood robbers  
Kicking down the doors  
For no apparent reasons, other than besetting upon the  
poor  
Definitely not something we implore  
Nor do we ignore  
Fore the whole nature surrounding hood and evil can only  
confuse those who never experienced or understood  
The good of the hood versus the evil and its seductive  
promises  
That are in alliance to delude  
Clearly the manifestation of a darkness that can not co-  
exist  
With the goodness of the hood  
Optimistically we'll be able to understand the idea of hood  
and evil  
In a broaden light  
If we only recognize and acknowledge the hood  
As a symbol of virtuousness  
In which is beneficially and morally right  
An option to prevail  
As long as we don't continue to inhale  
The evil that's not waiting to exhale the wickedness it  
entails  
Welcome to the hood  
Unveiled!





## Choosing Friends

Choosing friends is essential to the comprehensiveness of  
building relationships  
Whether they be platonic or intimate  
There are explicit elements that characterize meaningful  
friendships  
Like loyalty, trust and respect  
General characteristics we expect  
To find in true friendships  
Choosing friends is a requisite we entreat  
When venturing into interacting with each other  
In life, our dependency upon interacting begins with our  
mothers  
Fathers, uncles, aunts, sisters and brothers  
Notwithstanding the knowledge, wisdom and nurturing of  
grandfathers, and grandmothers  
Friendships biologically connected  
Unfortunately friendships not always under biological  
protection  
Similar to the choices in friendships abated-literally stated  
"True friends are hard to find"  
Perhaps in reality-they're harder to identify and define  
Especially those with hidden agendas  
An analysis of the true pretenders  
Ordinarily we rely upon the conduct that implies  
What true friendships obliges us to be  
Faithful, trustworthy and having a knack for dependability  
Never forgetful about our actions that are preventable  
For instance; true friends respect space and privacy  
They don't engage with significant others  
In fornication or adultery  
Nor do they voice comments or opinions that are  
inflammatory  
Mainly behind your back  
Or influences you to go on the attack  
And to even entertain the thought of betrayal  
Is in opposition  
Fore friends don't engage in suspicion  
Nor contribute to a friends' addiction  
True friends enforce methods of intervention  
While the pretenders lip profess their optimistic intentions

Always claiming to be your very best  
That is your b.f.  
Yet they're even more scandalous than the rest  
Their definition of friendship  
A jest  
All consumed within their own mess  
And desire-while true friends inspire  
By maintaining patience in suppressing their own  
unwelcoming desires  
Those whispers that entices  
While in all actuality they maintain the understanding  
preferential friendships  
The type that may be differential  
To that in which is ostensible  
So be mindful of what to expect-in choosing friendships  
Preconceived expectations-do not define cordial relations  
But may imply- a sort of desperation  
In acquiring friendships that must meet extreme  
qualifications  
In accordance to an interpretation as to what friendships  
Should and should not be  
When we should inevitably choose friends with a degree of  
certainty  
That they be -who they say they be  
Those individuals whose character represents stability  
By facilitating in guiding an encouraging  
Being influential with enormous potential in elevating  
positivity  
By avoiding association with those who exploit life's  
negativities  
Entrapped in the experimental stages of life known to be  
detrimental  
Choosing friends is a force to contend with  
Often times we're most reluctant as to who we can call friend  
So we can no longer pretend our acceptance in claiming  
Everyone who says: he's a friend-is a friend  
Fore friendships become manifestations through the actions  
and determination  
Of those committed to establishing genuine relations  
In which the true friend-like true love-blots the self out and  
thinks more of the friends well being  
Then of thy self.

## Breaking The Cycle of Imprisonment

An inquisition into the cycle of imprisonment  
May reveal some disturbing events  
Primarily those of enslavement  
Of mind, body, and soul  
Besetting upon our spiritual  
Instilling fear upon the psychological  
And incarcerating the physical  
Each aspect ensuring we remain miserable  
As we shall be as long as we remain in this dysfunctional  
mindset of imprisonment  
An unfortunate inheritance for our descendants  
Giving cause to ascend for the oppressor  
A very manipulative calculating aggressor  
Visualizing himself as superior  
While every aspect of our imprisonment creates an adaptation  
towards feeling inferior  
Never in human existence, has such a cycle been so wearier  
Which develops a serious a serious need to understand the  
interior-cycle of imprisonment  
And how did we become facilitators of such infamous  
behavior  
Well to begin, we've adopted this diabolical trend  
A deep seeded infatuation  
For sexual and violent confrontations repetitiously publicized  
throughout this nation  
A form of intoxication  
Found with a sort of sickly twisted sensation  
Thereby infringing upon the principles, values and morals of  
a life we've found to be elated

Now being abrogated  
Entire communities sedated and inoculated  
With movies what we hear and see  
Oppose to what we were created to be  
Or to have  
Which is; freedom of individuality to explore our potentiality  
and be as creative as we can be  
Not some formality that would prevent any human being from  
his or hers potential life attainability  
Not to forget how our communities have been fascinated by  
weapons of destruction  
Preferably alcohol and drug consumption  
Deceitfully as the only means to effectively function  
To the extant that  
This cycle of imprisonment  
Has become a covenant  
Breaking the cycle of imprisonment is a means to circumvent  
The enslavement that created this imprisonment  
Especially for our descendants  
Born into this cycle of imprisonment  
Subjected to our irresponsibility to guide, direct and educate  
Instead we continue to procreate in accordance  
With a cycle that continues to dictate  
What you are to think-and not how to think  
Surely baffling to any man's instincts where the concept of  
independent thought becomes extinct  
So beware from the cuppeth in which you drink  
In it's literal and metaphorical sense  
Fore breaking the cycle of imprisonment will serve as the  
paramount of accomplishments, that shall define  
True freedom of empowerment!

## Selfish Despair

Would it be selfish despair  
 If I was to say I wasn't here as a result of accusations of  
 multiple affairs?  
 How about if it was said: I wasn't there because of doubts  
 about paternity?  
 Perhaps if it was said I wasn't there  
 Under the pretences that resources were scarce  
 Or if it was said: I wasn't there  
 Because the freedom of opportunity wasn't there  
 And if it was to say I wasn't there  
 Because my incarceration was a direct result of any  
 attempts to provide and take care  
 Then surely these would all prove to be misconceptions  
 Now if it was said I wasn't there because I didn't care  
 Well that wouldn't be a misconception  
 Rather, the ultimate lie  
 Though my actions in life, speak otherwise  
 And there's no excuses, explanations or other reasons  
 why I wasn't there  
 Other than Out of selfish despair  
 In which is why I never allow myself time to prepare  
 For my responsibilities  
 Knowing very well I'm about to become a daddy  
 To my precious baby  
 But old selfish me  
 Just too caught up in doing me  
 Although fascinated by the concept of being called daddy  
 Never comprehending the responsibilities, qualities and  
 commitment required in becoming  
 What a daddy should be  
 Selfish despair just wouldn't allow me  
 To busy playing the streets  
 Just chasing my life for me  
 Content in the realization of just having a baby  
 Just to call daddy's little girl

Rasheed my seed  
 But not my dreams  
 Not to be misconstrued  
 My dreams evolved out of thuggish style living  
 Get rich schemes  
 A confession of how selfishly I failed you  
 Not a common thing for responsible parents to do  
 For the most part  
 Their sacrifices don't depend  
 They suspend their hopes and dreams  
 For at least eighteen  
 Years of that child's life  
 Despite the many trials, tribulations and strifes  
 Although I may have, insignificantly played a part in your  
 life  
 For the few years I was there  
 They too were only signs of my selfish despair  
 The core as to why I declare  
 Your mother's love, honor and respect-rare  
 And nothing can compare as to how unfair it was of me  
 To pursue this selfish despair  
 Inconsiderate to the impact it would have upon you  
 And I realize-sometimes, sorry just won't do  
 But reality distinctively acknowledges-what is true-to be  
 true  
 And the truth allows me to vocalize  
 What my heart always felt for you  
 Rasheeda I love you  
 And there's no excuses or ruses about why we do what we  
 do  
 I wasn't there and that be true  
 So now I pray  
 Circumstances will not once again, result in me depriving  
 you  
 The consequences of living destructively aware  
 On the path of selfish despair!

## *The consequences of living destructively aware On the path of selfish despair!*

### Dear Editors at The Beat

May peace be upon you and those striving to educate  
 young minds. I'm resubmitting four poems a few months  
 ago for the publication and for the readers of The Beat.  
 I'm uncertain as to whether they were ever published  
 or not having not received a copy of The Beat Within  
 with the poems in it. Unfortunately, being incarcerated  
 subjects us to some ignorant small minded individuals  
 who are suppose to be professional, yet their actions are  
 of a different nature. However they play mail games.

The four poems were entitled: 1.Sounds of the  
 Heart, 2.Choosing Friends,3. Breaking The Cycle of  
 Imprisonment 4. Selfish Despair. I revised each of  
 these poems and I'm now resubmitting them along with  
 another one entitled: Hood and Evil. I hope the readers  
 enjoy. Also I'm enclosing a small donation to The Beat  
 Within (in which isn't much) but I'm sure every little bit  
 helps, considering these astronomical gas prices that are  
 continuing to climb by the hour. So we pretty much can  
 rest assure that stamps and postage cost will definitely  
 be on the rise.

Peace Darnell

## Sounds of the Heart

The sounds of the heart  
 A remarkable  
 proportionate part  
 Of the human anatomy  
 Succumbing in  
 submission  
 Constantly engaged in  
 collective thought  
 Including feelings that  
 exhilarate  
 Generating sparks that  
 illuminate  
 The sounds of the heart  
 Even sounds that are  
 precisely in defiance with  
 the sounds in the back of  
 your mind  
 Understanding sounds of  
 the heart as an occupation  
 In managing love, trust,  
 and commitment  
 Even recollecting about  
 the love we had as  
 children  
 Playing games like truth  
 or dare  
 The sounds of the heart  
 challenging your inner

voice to scream  
 I dare  
 An apparent inundation of  
 bashfulness we all shared  
 Engaged in those boy kiss  
 girl games played after  
 dark  
 Eminent reasons that  
 sparked  
 The sounds of the heart-  
 to come-to come into a  
 recognition  
 From it's seclusion  
 Symbolic of the profound  
 children's game-hide and  
 seek  
 Unveiling sounds of the  
 heart that are unique  
 Like experiencing that  
 pulsating beat  
 The sound of African  
 drums giving rhythm to  
 the movement of the feet  
 Like the sounds of the of  
 the heart that greet  
 All of your senses in a  
 note fashion  
 A safe asylum for the  
 sounds of the heart  
 That speaks volume!

## Words Of Advice

Hello to The Beat Within and fellow gifted and talented writers. I hope these sincere caring words find's those who are reading this in the best of health! Once again I advance to you all my greeting in all formalities to those that find themselves inside and out these walls, to those inside maintain, hold a composure as some of us may say just another magical day, which is inspiring to be alive living it to the fullest, to the best way we can! "Well Beat," homies once again Gracias... "Especially to The Beat." It's highly appreciated and to those that contribute to the Beat.

It's a pleasure reading different mind, different personalities. I give it up to you guys. Especially, for those with good intentions. I know in time it'll pay off in the long run. So discipline yourselves and keep up the great work and just be precautions. We all know it can get frustrating, difficult, and hard at times. We just feel like giving up and letting go, but there's a door we are trying to reach! So hold forward and truthful! This will get you far and out of trouble... Also be aware of those shadows that try to consume us and bring us down.

"Well," just a little word of advice to those that wish to embrace it. I know some of us don't like hearing this or make it seem like we know this, but at times we find ourselves in situations we shouldn't even be in... "Well" I'm going to write a little about the fascinating topic "Eye Opener" I've had many eye openers... I really don't know where to begin.

The first eye opener started out in the L.A County Jail. It was concerning my case, "which was strong arm robbery" (5 counts) and "Gang Enhancement, Terrorist Threats," I was looking at 37 to life, possible getting a strike out. I remember that first court date. I was just going to be 18 years old. It my first time in a man's facility, first time in a real court! They mentioned my name and the charges I was facing. They turn to the witnesses and pointed at me and mentioned the years I was facing.

My heart just sank. It was the worst feeling I ever had and the worst thing about it, there was no one there for me. Not even one family member there. The image that came up was things I had that I would never have again. The main thing I thought about was family, friends, and girls. I thought about how I wish I wouldn't have never done the crime. If I would only had got one more chance.

This was the biggest "Eye Opener". It was no dream. It was reality. I remember going back to the cell and I remember feeling empty. It still didn't sink in until I called my mother, she burst out crying and that's when it touch me cause I knew I'll never be able to sit at her table and eat her delicious food. I thought about a lot of things as much as I wanted to cry, I didn't! I didn't want to be seen. I didn't want to be looked at different, but I held my tears and emotions.

I later gave up. I lost hope. At times I would just ask God for another opportunity. As much as I asked everything just started looking worst for me. I later started making a name for my self, since I was going to be here for the rest of my life, I would raise my hand and I would do just about anything.

The homie love was cool. I felt good and proud, but when I would end up in the hole, that's when everything sunk in. I remember I let it all out. I put my face between the sheets and let it all out. I thought about how I could have done things different. School came up. I didn't even make it past 9th grade. I thought about how sporty I could be going to school. I thought about all the beautiful women.

I thought just about everything, especially food. When I was in the hole eating juke balls, it was nasty, but there was nothing else to eat. So in order to survive you have to eat. I remember looking up to Friday and Monday. It was sack lunch.

I fought my case for one year. Almost two things started looking better. They drop the gun charges. So my time went to 18 years and they took the life sentences but wanted to strike me out. I took the risk and fought it a little more. It later dropped to 12 years. I felt better but it was still a long time. I prayed and prayed.

If it could just go down and little more and remove the strikes, but that was impossible. I thought of taking the 12 but I went all out and I pushed it. I asked for a better deal and I would take it right now. My lawyer later came back with news "He felt was good." I had two deals.

One was 5 years two strikes and the other one was seven years 1 strike. I didn't know what to say or do. 5 years sounded good, but I know how I am and I thought about ending up with life. 7 years was a long time, especially when I was just 18 years old. I finally made up my mind and I took the seven years with one strike. I pleaded no contest to 2nd degree robbery (2 years) and a 5 year to gang enhancement. I was happy, but at the same time scared. I didn't talk much. I just kicked it! I would hear stories about prison that frighten me, but I managed to be strong and face my consequences.

Everywhere I went I had love. People saw me as just a kid. I was guided by good people. I let it be known I was headed to prison. People gave me their best advice. They guided me and explained to me how it was and how there are many snakes, many drugs and lots of politics.

**Our next writer is writing to us from a Correctional Facility in San Diego, Ca. Our friend Rolando is no stranger to The Beat Within magazine as he drops words of wisdom constantly in his pieces. He's a young writer that was living in the fast lane like a lot of you young readers out there. Been through the juvenile system and now a product of the adult system. Rolando has learned and realized how much he wants to do positive things. That's why he constantly writes to us so he can reach out to anyone who's listening. So kickback people and read some words of advice that might help you out with whatever problem you may be going through.**

I sucked it up. I observed everything that was said and given to me. There were times where I had to put in my work. So I would do it. I didn't know that later it would take effect in prison. Which it did.

I went to Tehachapi Reception Yard. I remember the first day I stepped in. I seen towers and I seen guards. They each carried pepper spray. The tower was holding a rifle. So it was scary, we each held a number with our name and they took a picture, which they used to identify us. We were later handed ID's that we would keep. They took our fingerprints and handed us a blanket, a spoon, a cup and they slowly housed us in a cell. We had cellies so that led to kill the time.

I was the youngest one there, so I had most of the attention, especially with the guards. I had an older homie who has been in and out of prison. So I was lucky and fortunate. He laced me up on the top and showed me how to program and how to conduct myself. He told me all about the inside world, to our skin color and how we walk and set the example to other races. I didn't know much so I would ask? I asked about a million questions? I felt like I was bugging him. I said to myself, poor man!

I liked his style, he was a straight gangster. We rolled our mats, we worked out and we shared stories. He told me the political game and how I should just keep it to myself. Don't bring any type of attention around, any gambling, drugs, wine, to even STD's and the Hepatitis C. I didn't know or understand but I would just listen. Time went by and mom's wrote a few times and shot me some funds. I never made it to store. Someone had got stabbed pretty bad so that was like our punishment. I later saw a counselor that endorsed me to Ironwood - Level 3. I signed papers after papers. I was sent back to my cell. I ran it by to O.G. and he was proud, he said I'll be leaving soon and I did. I left O.G. behind. We hugged and said to stay out of trouble. He said he'll later catch up.

"Prison is a small world! I left. I was on the bus early in the morning. It was packed. I met a lot of homies each from different parts of L.A. and different areas in California. Everything O.G. said, I held it in mind and I did as he said. Everything he told me that's exactly how it went down. And at times I would just laugh and wonder how my "Camarada" OG was doing.

I later forgot about what he said and I started doing the opposite. I later learned the hard way. I hit a few holes. "I patch them up," I later made a name for myself I started getting into things I should have left alone like O.G. said. But I'm happy to say I'm sitting here strong and solid. I got enough school to walk and set my own path and walk my grounds. I've learned many things and I've learned to set things aside, all these were "Eye Openers" things I had to go through to learn.

It's been 6 years and I'm still here. I'm getting shorter to my date and I'm happy to say I'm a changed young man. That has the authority to speak. I've learned it. I've walked it. But why go through this? I read (in The Beat) some of your young homies from the Hall's and at times talk about the same shhh. I was once there talking a good one, putting in work just for attention, fame, respect. There's no need. There's a lot of ways to get this and it's not all just physical. Think about it. I was just there six years ago and I'm still here just for doing the things you were doing, you're still doing, or have in mind to do. It's wasted time. This is time we are throwing away, that we can use.

## Especially Productive

I just hope I was able to touch some one and make one think twice. Think about your mom and the loved ones. They need you more then being in here.

As for those older homies out there, gracias for the advice, the love, and unity. I pray for you homies out there doing serious time. I know how it is.

My story goes on but I'll leave it for the next chapter. I wish every one the best. Good luck for those who have cases that are still pending and for those with problems all day. May God give you strength and power. Keep your heads up! I will excuse myself as I came tipping my hat and saluting you with my utmost love and respect.

Gracias for your time and enjoy your day, your night, evening, whatever it may be! Gracias Beat. God bless!



## The Heart

The heart this organ does a lot  
 It beats many times  
 In just one minute  
 Every minute throughout the day  
 Keeping us alive  
 It guides us as our feeling begin to arrive  
 It can give us direction  
 Even tell us when we are in love  
 Can bring us joy  
 In everything  
 We can't ignore our heart  
 Never will we be able to analyze it  
 Never will be the day to let it be  
 Filled with fiery darts  
 During us life, the most important  
 Organ of all  
 Keep it safe or make  
 Just any call.

Our next writer is writing to us from Gatesville, Texas. Connie is a fairly new writer for The Beat Within publication. We're sorry if we didn't get to publish your writing last time, but we were a little behind and short on staff. So we take responsibility for that. But we got your latest work now and please keep sending it in so we can all read some of your work. Thank you!

## Friends

Friends are there to heal the wounds  
 To pull out of saddened moods  
 To brighten up your cloudy skies  
 To wipe your tears during good-byes  
 Friends are there with open arms  
 To comfort you and block you from any harm  
 To keep your secrets hidden away  
 To entertain you when you want to play  
 Friends are there for the smiles and the tears  
 Friends are there for the happiness or fears  
 Friends are friends and friends are clever  
 And the ties that bind friends can last forever.

## Curtis

Closer we become  
 Its strength and love  
 Uniqueness I feel  
 From the friendship we are gifted from above  
 Really you do mean a lot to me  
 I just want you to know  
 Till the day we meet  
 I will think of what we might be  
 I believe it will be wonderful  
 Even more than words can say  
 So until that time  
 We will have to keep us this way  
 Thank you for your friendship  
 You must know that you  
 Mean a lot to me.

## A Choice

I've known a million people  
 Many are right like me  
 We're standing on the line between right and wrong  
 Doing time, trying to stay strong  
 While our families wait, and watch  
 With their hearts broken, not knowing what to do  
 It's time we realize this is not just about me and you  
 They love us, offering all the help that we can  
 Even when they knew we were wrong  
 They were our biggest fan  
 The crime I did,  
 I could have never hid  
 Reckless for so long  
 I just couldn't go on  
 Sorry for the hurt, the pain, the tears I've caused  
 I try hard to make them proud  
 While they sit waiting with their lives on pause  
 We promise we'll try  
 If we don't we are behind to die  
 Today I only know one way  
 To my knees I will fall  
 All my pride set aside  
 To the Lord I will confide  
 As he breaks me, I will begin to see  
 The sun is shining through the rain  
 The Lord tells me everyone feels pain  
 I can never regret, I won't forget  
 Words are not enough  
 You must be willing to be tough  
 Without him I'd be no where  
 Still on the road I had found tied and bound  
 God believes in us no matter what  
 He waits with his hand stretched out and arms open  
 Saying, "My path is narrow"  
 And has many promises he'll never break  
 This way is better than being on the streets  
 Or loosing your freedom  
 What choices will we make  
 Pick up your cross, don't be afraid  
 He will always be with you  
 Yes, when you have strayed  
 It's most a challenge, only a choice,  
 Make yours today before it's too late  
 Let Jesus be your mate.

## Pain

The pain is shinning through the rain  
 He'll be there through the calm and the storm  
 The lord tells me we all see and feel pain  
 I can never regret  
 I will never forget  
 The pain I suffer or the pain I caused  
 Words are not enough  
 We have to learn to be tough  
 Without the Lord I'd be nowhere  
 Still on the road I had found  
 Tied and forever bound  
 God believes in us no matter what  
 He waits with his hands stretched out  
 His arms open wide  
 He'll love us unconditionally  
 Even offer us promises he will never break  
 This way is better than being on the streets  
 Or loosing our freedom what choice will  
 We make  
 Pick up your cross don't be afraid  
 The Lord is always with you even if you have strayed  
 This is not a challenge, only a choice  
 Make yours today before it's too late  
 Come on make your choice to  
 Let Jesus be your  
 Closest mate.

### It's Your Touch

Thinking of you  
 Of your touch  
 The warmth you share  
 For that special someone  
 Because you cared

It's your touch  
 It keeps me and comforts me  
 Lets me know you are there  
 This is how it's suppose to be

It's your touch  
 Just when I thought it couldn't get better  
 The softness of your hands  
 Your lips are moist  
 Your love is my witch  
 I can see all  
 It's your touch.

### Fear

The past is fear  
 The present is fear  
 The future is fear  
 To think of what  
 Or what could have been  
 To look at where we are now  
 Locked up, bound by time  
 Fighting for personal survival  
 We're learning, wondering  
 What will be next...  
 My prayer is that the Lord  
 Will open our eyes further than  
 We can see.

### Dear Beat

With the utmost respect allow me to re-introduce myself again to The Beat Within. My name is Jeremy Murphy, and I reside in Santa Cruz County. I am now 25 years old doing a small violation of my parole here at San Quentin.

For years I wrote to The Beat Within through Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall. At 17 I was sent to CYA to do nine months...I did two years before I took my case back to court. Two weeks later, I was released on probation, no parole, with a verdict being "unjustly sentenced". I just so happen to be placed with the disease of addiction, as so many of us troubled youth are, which has whooped my behind through the years.

Something clicked for me November of '06. I have been going to meetings since my early teens (N.A./A.A.), but in November of '06 I actually started hearing a message and I jumped right into the program. I went to meetings everyday, got a sponsor, started working my steps and made true friends. Something started happening for me at this point in my life. I was free, more then free from incarceration but truly free inside.

For the first time in my life I gave myself a chance. At 24 I didn't know how to drive, I went to the DMV and did the legit route, permit and all that, a little over a year later, and I can drive stick and automatic. I was working and paying taxes, started going

to Cabrillo College and fell in love with a beautiful woman.

All of a sudden, I was distracted by materialistic bull. I lost my focus on gave me the opportunity to experience such a wonderful life, the program of Narcotic Anonymous.

Needless to say, because I stopped working a program in N.A, I relapsed, due to the poor choices I made. I lost my car, my love and my freedom. I still parole in a few months and have a chance to rebuild burnt bridges and make amends.

Writing is still a passion for me. Writing is therapeutic and can extremely lift my spirits in this cold world. I would highly appreciate your issues, for all the youthful inspiration. Enclosed is a poem I wrote on May 12th, I would also like some type of response just so I know this was received well. One more thing, when I was in Juvi in Santa Cruz I thought we had it bad. Boy was I mistaken, the food gets worse (not that we don't eat fat in S.C. Juvi), the cells get smaller, and the people get meaner. Count your blessing while you still have them. With Respects,

### To The Beat Within

I wrote you approximately two weeks ago and requested that some of my work be published in your weekly magazine/pamphlet. I never got a response as to whether it would or would not appear. I had also ask for a copy of the issue in which it would/has appeared, never receiving one. Could you please update me on the status of my work?

If it has been printed in an issue, could I please get a copy of that issue? Thank you! I would like to request copies of the beat as often as you are willing to send them. Thank you! I am enclosing a couple of poems for printing if/when they print could I please get a copy of that issue. Thank you!

### The Smile

The sky is blue  
 With clouds in shapes of many pretty things  
 The grass is green  
 Just think of all the uniqueness in between  
 The smile in which it brings

God has created it all  
 Even the butterflies, ladybugs, and  
 The birds you hear, making their call  
 Life in full extraordinary beauty  
 The smile  
 It leaves is a cutie

I can't wait to share it with you  
 One day be both will see  
 With a hug and kiss  
 We will share in all the glorious things  
 This I don't want to miss  
 To see,  
 The smile.

### JEREMY MURPHY

Our next writer is writing to us from San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, Ca. Jeremy use to write for The Beat Within magazine back in the days when he was incarcerated in Santa Cruz. He is now back serving some time in the pen for some of the mistakes he kept making. We all make mistakes but we keep repeating them, that means we're not learning anything. And sometimes it takes for us to find ourselves behind bars to realize where we are actually trying to go in life. Nobody plans to go the pen for a long time, but we have to be aware that every decision we make today will affect our future. So listen up to Jeremy's story and hopefully some of y'all can take heed to some of the things he's saying.

### Abattoir of Thoughts

After arrant cognition, of my preposterous situation  
 It's befit to say I am but an abecedarian  
 On a psychological, impregnable, mission impossible  
 Only to be cloistered in this vault of dissipated lucidity  
 This steadfast engagement of mental paralysis  
 Only achieving sovereignty over ones own subjugated, servile mind  
 Can you begin to understand my current predicament?  
 Can you begin to see this lack of sanity is permanent?  
 And where would one look for his lost sanity  
 Hiding somewhere in this vicinity  
 Like the demons in the back of your mind building a metropolis city  
 I myself began to wonder where I'm going with this  
 My enmity only furthering my mental paralysis  
 Creating an abattoir of thoughts  
 Creating demons of rot  
 Creating a life, never imagined, or sought  
 Do you feel welcomed in my purgatory?  
 Pull up a chair, relax, breath in my insanity  
 Here, take my hand, let me guide you through Hell  
 As darkness envelopes all souls that fell.

*It's been 6 years and I'm still here. I'm getting shorter to my date and I'm happy to say I'm a changed young man. That has the authority to speak. I've learned it. I've walked it. But why go through this? I read (in The Beat) some of your young homies from the Hall's and at times talk about the same shhh. I was once there talking a good one, putting in work just for attention, fame, respect. There's no need. There's a lot of ways to get this and it's not all just physical. Think about it. I was just there six years ago and I'm still here just for doing the things you were doing, you're still doing, or have in mind to do. It's wasted time. This is time we are throwing away, that we can use.*

*read the rest of Ascencio Rolando's BWO piece on page 65*

